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United News™

News of the United Church of God, an International Association

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November 2002

News At a Glance

10,855 Respond to BSC Offer So Far

"We have recently mailed a letter offering the *Bible Study Course* to 170,000 *Good News* subscribers," said Scott Ashley, managing editor. "We expect to add around 15,000 to 20,000 new *Bible Study Course* subscribers as a result of the letter." This will more than triple the 6,699 students who were receiving the course in September.

The last time *GN* subscribers received a letter offering the course was in April 2001 when 16,156 signed up. This was 10.3 percent of the 157,048 letters mailed at that time.

Plans include offering the course to *GN* subscribers annually.

Half Million Booklets Printed

In the weeks leading up to the Feast we updated and reprinted 30,000 each of the booklets *What Is Your Destiny?*, *God's Holy Day Plan, Heaven & Hell* and *Is There Really a Devil?* In October two more were sent for reprinting: *How to Understand the Bible and Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Really Matter Which Days We Keep?* With these reprints, we have printed or reprinted 550,000 booklets so far this year. This brings the total printed since United began to more than 2.3 million booklets.

Scott Ashley

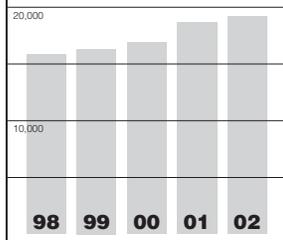
Managing Editor, Internet, Hired

Aaron Booth has been hired to work in the Media and Communications Services department as managing editor of

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United Statistics

Feast Attendance
Up 22 Percent in 5 Years



New Feast Sites Being Planned for 2003

Several new U.S. Feast sites are being planned for 2003.

- Lexington, Kentucky, is a more centrally located replacement for Gatlinburg, Tennessee.
- In Colorado, a lower-altitude replacement for Keystone will be introduced.
- Kerrville, Texas, was chosen to provide variety after all the years at Corpus Christi.
- Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii will replace Lihue, Kauai for at least 2003.

Other U.S. sites should remain the same, but final contracts have not been signed, and more details will appear in *United News* as they become available. The March/April 2003 issue will include site descriptions.

After a Feast teleconference Oct. 15, Roy Holladay wrote: "United is dedicated to providing the best possible venues and schedules for the Feast. We are also sensitive to the needs of all the brethren when it comes to Festival planning and site

selection. We want to combine the needs of our members with the desire to please God. We certainly want God's approval and His name on each of our Feast sites.

"In an effort to effectively plan the Feast, we are now looking ahead two to three years and booking potential Feast sites based on program needed. We will take into consideration spiritual growth, and demographic and geographical needs. We plan to offer an even greater variety of choices in the

future for your Festival planning . . .

"In the Southwest Region, we will continue to meet in Escondido, California, for the Feast in 2003. However, in 2004 and 2005 we plan to have two smaller sites in the region: one in California and one in Arizona. In this way we can accommodate the needs of our brethren and plan a quality program for everyone involved."

The U.S. Festival team also determined that they would not pursue organizing a cruise or a U.S.-sponsored international tour for 2003. **UN**

More Than 19,000 Celebrate Feast



Receiving a Feast gift in Esquipulas, Guatemala (photo by Cesar Guzmán); right, a lamb and lion helped Kelowna Feastgoers on opening night (photo by Jerry Jantzen)

Several Feast of Tabernacles sites in the United States, Canada and elsewhere were bursting at the seams with record numbers of attendees, as more than 19,231 celebrated the Feast with United. This is about a 3 percent increase worldwide, and a 6 percent increase for the United States and Canada where attendance was 12,962.

Several sites suffered the effects of Hurricanes Isidore and Lili, but the effects of prayer were seen as the storms did not develop as expected and brethren were protected. See reports from around the world, starting on page 6. **UN**

Holy Day Offerings Up; Regular Income Nearly Flat

by Roy Holladay

We have had the opportunity to observe the financial trends for the first quarter of the 2002-2003 fiscal year. The Holy Day offerings have exceeded our budgeted projections, but Category One (regular tithes and offerings, assistance funds and misc.) income is nearly flat. I would like to quote from reports from our treasurer, Tom Kirkpatrick, in which he outlined the financial trends.

"This year, we budgeted a modest increase in Category One income of 2.38 percent. As of Nov. 1, the year-to-date increase is 0.7 percent. Thus, Category One income, which is 71 percent of our budgeted income, is nearly flat—almost exactly the same amount received this year so far as for the corresponding period last fiscal year—virtually no increase. If this trend were to continue for the entire fiscal year, it would represent a budget shortfall of \$215,000.

"For Category Two (Holy Day offerings), we budgeted \$2,465,000 for the four fall Holy Day offerings. It is now nearly all in and banked. The total is now at \$2,565,000, which is \$100,000 above budget. Obviously, for these strong offerings, we are grateful.

"For Category Three [all remaining

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Waiting Rooms Pruned to Prepare for Growth

by John LaBissoniere

In keeping with the plan approved for this fiscal year, the circulation of *The Good News* has been pruned in order to be able to offer it to more new individual subscribers. Businesses receiving the magazine for their waiting rooms were sent renewal notices, and just under 6 percent renewed. The plan is to increase the number of new individuals receiving the magazine through the remainder of the fiscal year.

Waiting Room Growth and Survey Results

In 1998 and 1999, through the diligent efforts of the brethren in the United States, over 121,000 waiting rooms were added to the *Good News* sub-

scription files. Although subscriber response via inserts in the magazines remained reasonably steady throughout that period, by mid-2001, after almost three years of distribution, we were intensely curious to see just how many copies of the magazine were actually being placed on the reading tables in various businesses. We decided to conduct a survey.

In May 2001, 295 waiting rooms were physically visited by member volunteers in nine congregations. Results of their efforts showed that 32 percent of the magazines being sent to the businesses were being displayed. Although we had hoped for a higher percentage, the data at least illustrated the need to conduct a renewal program.

To ensure that offices displaying mag-

azines were given ample opportunity to continue receiving a subscription, we determined that an extensive renewal campaign conducted over a six-month period was required. Through this effort, all 121,000 waiting rooms were sent renewal packages for the May-June, July-August and September-October 2002 issues. We designed attractive and informative renewal letters and also included pre-addressed, postage-paid reply cards, all bundled together with *The Good News* in clear polybags. Only 6,700 businesses chose to remain on our subscription files.

Because of this, circulation of the November-December 2002 *Good News* topped out at 417,405. This is

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News At a Glance

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the Church's Internet presence. The Council of Elders expressed its wishes to establish this position in a resolution last December. "After studying many resumes and letters, we narrowed down our search to two candidates, and then subsequently chose one of them after long interviews," said Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services operation manager.



Aaron Booth, managing editor, Internet, with wife, Dawn, and daughter, Brooklyn

Mr. Booth, an Ambassador College graduate who is married and has a young child, was chosen for the position and is now working on moving to Cincinnati with his family. He and his wife, Dawn, have found a place to live, and he could start work sometime around mid-November. They currently reside in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Mr. Booth has spent time as a multimedia developer, senior interactive designer, new media designer and Web designer, along with marketing and public relations experience. He is fluent with all of the latest authoring and creative software.

Video Editing System Upgraded

On Oct. 29, the high-end Avid video editing platform in use at the home office in Cincinnati was upgraded from version 7 to version 11. "This is a much needed upgrade, and the Avid company has made a very good offer to users of the older system, which includes a trade-in of the old equipment to a brand-new hardware and software layout," said Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services operation manager. "We will actually take delivery of a brand-new Avid Media Composer 9000XL at a fraction of the cost of a stand-alone purchase. Our existing system is now seven years old, and as you know, in the electronic world equipment and software change fast."

The new Media Composer 9000XL operates at 20 times the speed and has 10 times the media storage capacity. Not only will it offer time savings during editing operations, but it also has a wider palette of options, graphic tools, audio tools and special effects.

"The Church will continue to use

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down from the September-October 2002 circulation record high of 526,173.

Circulation Target

Although *Good News* circulation is now at this lower level, it is actually in line with our circulation target for this budget year. Our goal is to end the fiscal year in June 2003, with a *Good News* circulation of about 500,000.

Our plan this year is to replace the non-renewing waiting rooms with new,

individual subscribers. This will result in approximately 114,600 new people receiving our flagship publication in place of those subscriptions. In addition, throughout this fiscal year approximately 51,500 people will not renew their subscription here in the United States. We will replace these readers with additional new subscribers, resulting in upwards of 166,000 total new subscribers added throughout the fiscal year by next June 30.

Around 40,000 will come from print advertising, and another 42,000 from Internet advertising and our Web sites. The work of our other promo-

tional efforts, including gift subscriptions, waiting room cards, newsstand promotions and member involvement, will make up the remaining 84,000.

Our print run currently consists of 321,400 individual subscribers. Our continual renewal process ensures that only people who want the magazine receive it, allowing us to offer the *GN* to new readers as we work diligently to spread the seed and look for fertile ground!

New Waiting Room Initiative

Regarding waiting rooms, there are still many thousands of businesses in

the United States that have never had the opportunity to subscribe to *The Good News*.

Congregations and brethren who are interested in physically visiting waiting rooms and personally offering subscriptions to *The Good News* are welcome to do so. We can provide lists of waiting rooms that have already subscribed, so as not to duplicate efforts. One advantage of personal visits to waiting rooms is that it can be determined immediately whether or not a business desires a subscription. Be sure to let us know if you are interested in this effort. **UN**

"Income," continued from page 1

income, which tends to come in uneven flows through the year, such as donations to the camp fund, Festival fund, ABC tuition, etc.), we are running about 10 percent below budget. While it is diffi-

cult to predict, we may assume that this category will end this fiscal year at close to budget.

"In summary, we are now running at a trend that means we could end the fiscal year next June 30 below the amount of budgeted income. Certainly, this can change, but that is the situation as of now.

It would obviously be helpful, therefore, for everyone to do all they reasonably can to keep costs under control and within budget. Further, it would be helpful if we all prayed that God would send additional income if that is His will."

With these trends in mind, we have asked all the ministry and staff to care-

fully monitor and watch expenses. We are carefully monitoring cash flow and cutting back on unneeded expenses here at the home office.

With the great work God has given us to do, let's all pray that God will send additional income if that is His will. **UN**

Letters

Correction

In the article "Eastern European Literature on the Web" in the July issue it incorrectly stated that Robyn Kleinbergs translated the Holy Days booklet into Latvian. While Mrs. Kleinbergs was the typist, the translation was done by her husband, Eddy Kleinbergs. We regret the error.

Popular Poem

Enclosed is a copy of a poem I had in my scrapbook that I got out of a *Blum's Almanac* about 70 years ago. You printed the poem in [August] *United News*,

page 11, under the title of "The Builder" by Jess Kenner. [It should be] "Wreckers" by H.S. Harp.

I have quoted this poem a few times at the Feast of Tabernacles talent shows in times past.

North Carolina

Thank you for passing along your information. We did some additional checking, and the librarian asserted that this poem was really called "Which Are You?" and was anonymous! (Published in Poems That Live Forever, Doubleday, 1965.) This poem gets around!

Indiana

Would Love to Attend Feast

I am satisfied with the magazine, and I recommended that my friends also read the magazine. I would love to attend the Feast next year, so could you keep me posted of when and where I could attend? This would be my first time attending such an event. I am willing to plan or set aside vacation time so that my family would be there.

Indiana

BSC Survey Response

Thank you for your *Bible Study Course* lessons. Especially this one (Lesson 7). I now have a much better understanding of just what God's calling is and how I need to respond to it. I plan to be in touch with one of your pastors in my area for further guidance.

Internet

Upgraded Publications

Just want to commend the team

behind the *Good News* magazine and *World News and Prophecy* and *United News* as I have noted the fine job done to upgrade each. They all look spectacular.

Internet

Searching for Church

Just want to say thank you for teaching the truth. I have read your magazines and I think they are great! I would like to visit your church, but I can't find it in my phone book. Can you help me? I live in Asheville. Can you send me the closest address in my area?

North Carolina

Humorous Literature Requests

Here are some interesting requests received at the home office:
God's Holiday Plans
Heaven and Hell—I would like any other books on marriage.

The United States and Britain in Prophecy
Making God Work
The Gossip of the Kingdom
The Road to Internal Life

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News From **Around the World**

South African National Council Addresses Wide-Ranging Issues

The South African National Council met Sept. 1 to discuss a wide variety of exciting and interesting matters.

In following up on old business, André van Belkum reported that he met with the bishop of a 2,000-member church to determine their level of interest. The bishop's wife seems very interested. Bill and Cheryl Jahns saw the couple later, and Mr. Jahns reported that the UCG sermon videos have been circulated and played to some of their congregations. Keeping the seventh-day Sabbath is a major obstacle at present. Mr. Jahns said the leaders are translating *The Good News* orally into Zulu for their members.

Peter Hawkins reported that Radio Tygerberg has been given a license to broadcast 24 hours per day. Two of the U.K. and two U.S. *Good News* radio programs have been provided as samples. The coordinator promised to listen to them soon to consider a regular spot. There would be no cost for airing the program. Although regional, the station has links with other regional stations around South Africa.

Chairman's Report

Mr. van Belkum reported that there has been continued growth in all aspects of the Church's operations in South Africa. The circulation of *The Good News* continues to increase, the

number of booklets and other items of literature distributed continues to escalate and the number of people receiving the *Bible Study Course* is increasing. Responses to our latest advertisement in *Reader's Digest* are meeting our expectations. Of course, this does mean that the staff members are busier than ever.

Thanks to the faithful and dedicated membership, the income shows a healthy growth pattern. Another factor is our vigorous media campaigns and advertising programs, which it seems the Eternal has blessed.

There are more and more people showing an interest in attending our Church services. With all the additional activity, we are very happy to welcome Bill and Cheryl Jahns to our team in Southern Africa. They will be a great help in carrying the additional work load.

A vehicle has been purchased for use in Zambia. This was made possible with funds from LifeNets. However, Kamani Banda first has to obtain a tax clearance before the vehicle can be imported into Zambia.

One of the major challenges in this region is the devastating drought ravaging large sections of the land. Without some assistance from the Church, the members will face severe food shortages. The home office has kindly

forwarded US\$1,200 for this purpose, and we are hoping to raise a further \$300 locally. A container loaded with clothes, food and other items should arrive in Malawi shortly.

Even though we face challenges, we are left with a feeling that the Church is being blessed.

Report by the Secretary/Treasurer

Secretary/Treasurer Neil Becker suggested that the remainder of the advertising budget be held in reserve to pay for the extra postal expenses due to the huge increase in number of booklets being mailed.

The total number of *Good News* subscriber magazines has nearly doubled in less than one year. Mail received from January through July this year is 11,491, of which about half is comprised of *Reader's Digest* response cards. Mail received per month was 1,642, almost double the 2001 monthly figure of 918. The mail sent out was 8,263 items or 1,180 per month, at least double the monthly figure of items sent in 2001.

Over a five-year period, 199 people have completed the *Bible Study Course* (BSC) and 514 received the first four lessons in the same time period. The BSC is being offered to new donors at present.

In considering the target for the *Good News* mailing list, a figure of 17,000 subscribers was agreed upon for the July/August 2003 issue.

Media Report

Peter Hawkins addressed the issue of achieving a sustainable mailing list level. The cost of replacing non-renewed readers has to be balanced by what is available in the budget. While a target of 17,000 on the mailing list is attainable, much will depend on what the treasurer is able to allocate to postage and advertising.

The number of literature requests is very high at present due to new readers seeing the booklet offers. We need to determine what constitutes a quality reader and how to find him or her. Much depends on the media chosen to advertise or promote our publications. *Reader's Digest* has brought many responses because their readers tend to be interested in "human interest" issues.

Translation of Booklets

Jorge de Campos brought up the subject of translating booklets. The Council considered it viable to translate booklets (such as those covering the Sabbath, death and the Fundamental Beliefs) and to publish them, for reading or downloading, on the ucgrsa.org

Web site. Afrikaans, Zulu and Xhosa are possible languages to consider. Robert Kading, Barry Strydom and Joyce Swart will discuss priorities for Afrikaans speakers. They will then E-mail the chairman with their suggestions and he will give the go-ahead. The project may go ahead as fast as feasible.

Possible Second Feast Site

Peter Hawkins brought up the fact that due to the distance from Cape Town, members traveling to Uvongo need extra days off work to travel by affordable transport. The Cape Town congregation has grown significantly since the beginning of 2002 and virtually all attending are adults.

The Council decided to ask for a show of hands at the Feast to see if there is sufficient interest to proceed with planning. Before the Feast Peter Hawkins would find out some accommodation costs in the Garden Route area for affordability. Figures would then be provided for Uvongo Feast-goers to help determine their interest.

The next South African National Council meeting was set for Sunday, Nov. 24, 2002, at the home of Bill and Cheryl Jahns. Ministers will meet prior to the meeting.

This material appeared in the September edition of United News—Southern Africa.

Australia Looks at Financial Trends, Sponsors Christian Leadership Camp

One of the recent projects of the Finance Committee of United Church of God—Australia has been to review the trends in income and expenditure for the last six years.

Here are some excerpts of a report by Drew Efimov:

- Media promotions and support spending is 8.7 times greater now than it was in 1996-97. As a proportion of total unrestricted funds expenditure, it has risen from 4.7 percent to 29.3 percent for the current budget year.

- When media promotion costs only are considered, the amount spent has gone from nil in 1997 to a high of \$58,500 (Australian dollars) last year. We have budgeted less (\$45,000) for the current year as a result of substantial *Good News* support costs and other competing needs. The costs of supporting the mailing list and subscriber development have more than tripled, from \$34,600 in 1999-00 to \$126,300 budgeted for 2002-03.

- Pastoral-related costs are lower now than they were in 1996-97 as a result of the indirect subsidy Australia receives from UCGIA for one salary. Costs for pastoral activities have fallen as a proportion of total expenses from 46.6 percent to 31.8 percent.



Attendees and lecturers at the Christian Leadership Camp 2002 in Australia

Leadership Camp

Esther Adams, a member of the Brisbane congregation, reported on the leadership weekend held July 5 to 7:

Christian Leadership Camp 2002 was an enriching and important reminder of the principles of living responsibly.

Heathcote Scout Camp, in Sydney's south, lent a comfortable setting to an intense weekend. Bill Bradford, Don Goodger, Roy Hickford and Bruce and Jeanette Dean (who also served as coordinators of the camp) presented the seminars and workshops.

The 36 people in the group were inspired to introspection by analytical and insightful questions posed by Mr. Bradford. "Are you being honest with

yourself? What choices are you making? What are your standards?"

Mrs. Dean directed the interactive workshop, "Our Responsibility Towards the Community and the World," where our collective responsibility for community service and environmental issues were discussed. Mr. Hickford gave some practical examples of how to act thoughtfully and responsibly in the real world. Mr. Goodger gave a presentation on how we can be responsible in working out our own salvation (Philippians 2:10-12). The camp concluded with Mr. Dean challenging us to apply our new-found knowledge to our daily lives.

This material appeared in the October-December 2002 United News Australia.

British National Council Meets

The British National Council met Sunday, Oct. 27, in the Tithe Barn at Polesworth. We were pleased to welcome Clyde Kilough, chairman of the Council of Elders, who was visiting us. The Bricket Wood congregation had the opportunity to hear from him the previous day.

The meeting covered personnel issues in an executive session following a report by John Jewell on behalf of Tina Jewell about the Feast of Tabernacles just concluded in Grange-Over-Sands, and a further report regarding possible locations for the Feast next year.

Mr. Jewell reported that attendees at Grange had been asked to complete questionnaires regarding their experience. Of the 98 forms returned, 5 were negative, 18 were maybes for a return to Grange and 75 were yes. A number of fine comments were received; among these were some very helpful criticisms which we are taking note of.

Feast of Tabernacles 2003

During the discussion, four possible locations were considered for the Feast in 2003. These were Grange-Over-Sands, Whitecross Bay at Windermere, Hereford and Edinburgh. The Council asked if Mrs. Jewell could perhaps get more information regarding Edinburgh and Hereford for future consideration. Regarding Whitecross Bay, it was felt

that using two different meeting halls would present unacceptable difficulties. The Council therefore approved a return to Grange-Over-Sands in 2003.

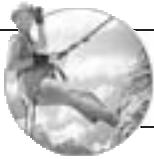
Also discussed was the need to appoint a new secretary for the National Council. In the meantime Dot Jarvis stepped in to take the minutes for this meeting. Frank Jarvis officially thanked Mark Webb, who has just stepped down from the office, for his willing performance of the secretarial duties and the time he had given to the responsibility.

Other subjects covered concerned amendments to the constitution and the possible establishment of a set of bylaws; trustees indemnity insurance which it was felt was needed; a report on the circulation by Jan Schroeder; a treasurer's report by Brian Penheiro in which he said that the income was 24 percent ahead of anticipated and expenses were running behind budget; and a brief discussion concerning subcommittees.

Media

The Council was updated on the plans for a public meeting in the Isle of Man in the spring. The logistics of this are now being assessed. A direct mail shot is also planned for late January to all those who did not renew their *Good News* subscription last year.

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 17. **UN**



United Youth Camps

Camp Conference Reviews and Plans for Next Year

by David Treybig

The United Youth Camp team, comprised of camp directors, the overall camp coordinator and specialty team members, met at the home office in Cincinnati, Ohio, Oct. 20-22. The purpose of the conference was to review last year's camps and plan for the future. Roy Holladay, president of UCGIA, also joined the group for these meetings.

Larry Greider, the overall camp coordinator, began the conference by reviewing the results of surveys from campers, staff and parents. The data showed that the average age of our campers rose slightly (14.39 years compared to 14.08 last year) and the majority of all groups understood the main goal of camp as developing a relationship with God and learning His ways in a godly environment. The percentage of parents recognizing this main goal of camp increased from 62 percent in 2001 to 70 percent this year. The activity cited most often by campers as the most helpful part of camp was Christian Living.

While the overall survey report was good, there were also some areas of concern. While many campers expressed appreciation for wearing camp shirts to eliminate being judged by others for their clothing, a few complained about having to wear camp shirts and follow other camp rules. There were also a few campers using bad language and a few girl campers who wanted to wear immodest clothing.

Comments from campers, staff and parents showed that more education and firmness in upholding our standards on dress are needed. Staff comments also requested screening out or dealing firmly with campers portraying bad attitudes and bringing down the morale of their dorms.

Reports on the camps this past summer were then given by each of the camp directors (Greg Sargent for Pinecrest, Randy Stiver for Oakhurst, David Dobson for Woodmen, Paul Luecke for the Tetons Challenger, Ken Treybig for Carter, Matthew Fenchel for Davidson and Darris McNeely for Heritage).

Next year, we will move from Oakhurst to a new facility, Camp Hye Sierra. The reason for the change is that Oakhurst now requires a minimum of 225 people—a number we do not anticipate being able to meet. James Capo, pastor of the Tucson and Sierra Vista, Arizona, and El Paso, Texas, congregations has been named camp director for this new camp.

Program Innovations

Reports of successful program innovations were then shared among the team. Darris McNeely began by explaining how Camp Heritage runs a two-track program comprised of the Adventure program for those ages 12 to 14 and the Challenger program for those ages 15 and older. He also reported that a group of counselors who have served for many years is in the process of writing a counselor's manual.

Matthew Fenchel, who had to monitor a potentially camp-canceling forest fire near Camp Davidson, reviewed an emergency decision-making process. Ken Treybig addressed the need to have more challenging activities for our older campers and the need to be aware of the heat in Texas. Paul Luecke shared with the group how having separate orientations for the boys and girls at the Tetons Challenger Camp allowed the staff to teach campers how to respect the opposite sex.

David Dobson reported on Camp Woodmen's experience in introducing a

pentathlon—a competition including five events. James Capo explained how Camp Oakhurst worked with the teens and young adults to select appropriate music for the dance. Greg Sargent found that having campers clean their dorms prior to going to breakfast on the last day solved a previous problem of getting the dorms cleaned prior to breaking camp.

Reviewing Policies and Guidelines

Discussion then turned to consideration of policies and guidelines. The difference between these terms is that a policy is considered the standard way all camps operate, while a guideline is a generally-agreed-upon principle to be applied at a camp director's discretion.

After discussing challenge tracks within camp programs, the team agreed that while challenger tracks and wilderness sessions have been very successful, there is a need to have better screening for physical condition and better scheduling. The next items of discussion included the development of a process for selecting camp directors, a review of Christian Living classes and how to develop and select staff.

The last item of discussion on Sunday was planning for next year's American Camping Association (ACA) accreditation visits. United Youth Camps were first visited and accredited by the ACA in the summer of 2000. Since accreditation lasts three years, it is time for our program to be revisited. The four camps that will receive visits in the coming year are Pinecrest, Woodmen, Tetons Challenger and Winter Camp.

Monday morning began with the camp team joining the home office staff for their Monday morning Compass Check—a meeting in which UCG president Roy Holladay covers a biblical



Roy Holladay, Ken Treybig, Dave Treybig and James Capo listen intently at camp conference (photo by Larry Greider)

principle. The Compass Check includes a prayer for God's guidance and blessing.

The camp team began Monday's work with a review of preteen camps. While oversight of these camps (all three days or less in length) is the responsibility of Ministerial Services, the United Youth Camp program serves as an advisor to these camps to encourage high standards of operation and help minimize legal liability. This past year in the United States, seven preteen camps served 375 campers. If a church pastor wishes to hold a preteen camp in his area, he is asked to contact Ministerial Services for approval.

Turning to donations, this past year United Youth Camps received approximately \$4,000 in corporate donations. To further develop our ability to attract funding from non-Church related sources, a proposal to establish a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization was considered.

Next came a report on Winter Camp by Steve Nutzman followed by review and discussion of various camp policies. The morning session concluded after covering staff training tapes, camp treatment procedures and health screening.

questionable logos. Because purchasing these shirts is a significant portion of each camp's budget, the team decided to explore the possibility of seeking corporate funding to help cover this cost.

Budget and Comments

After reviewing expenditures for 2002, the United Youth Camps team projects coming in under budget. The savings will come from increased member contributions and less expenses than projected. Indications are that next year camper tuition will probably remain the same for most camps. Two camps that anticipate tuition changes are Camp Hye Sierra, which will be slightly cheaper than Oakhurst (which it replaces), and Woodmen, which will likely have a slightly increased cost of operation. The team is pleased that the tuition rates for all United Youth Camps remain less than half the cost of the average camp in the United States.

The last session of the day was devoted to comments from Mr. Holladay and Richard Pinelli, head of Ministerial Services. President Holladay began by discussing the possibility of funding the printing of *Youth United* magazine by the savings from the camp program. Of course, printing this magazine would need to become a regular part of the Church's budget as opposed to savings from a particular program.

Concerning personnel, Matthew Fenchel will no longer serve as camp director of Camp Davidson after the 2003 session due to his increased workload at the home office. To make a smooth transition, we would like to name the succeeding camp director within the next few months so he will be able to work with Mr. Fenchel during the coming year. Mr. Holladay asked for input on this decision from the camp team.

Final Items

Tuesday, the final half-day of the conference, began with a discussion of our camp policy on body piercing. The next items discussed were insurance, an Access database used by camp directors to maintain records and use of the Web for applications. Regarding the latter, we are looking at a way to allow people to type in information on their computers prior to printing the form.

Discussion then turned to delegation and training people who can assume camp positions and responsibilities. The team wants to thank the many volunteers who make camp work so successfully.

The conference concluded with a presentation by Eric Nei of the American Camping Association office in Martinsville, Indiana. Mr. Nei works with accreditation and has a special interest in the impact of religion in challenge programs. After sharing some of his observations in this area, Mr. Nei answered questions from the camp team. **UN**

Hye Sierra Chosen as New California Camp

Campers will have the opportunity to pioneer a new camp experience in California's Sierra Nevada mountains in 2003. Rising costs at our previous camp in California made it necessary to relocate, and this year our new camp location at Camp Hye Sierra will enable us to offer several new activities.

Hye Sierra is a 130-acre camp located in the Sierra National Forest about 35 miles east of Fresno, California. It is within five miles of the entrance to Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks at 4,200 feet in elevation, which will enable us to use some of the outstanding features of these parks for camp.

On-camp activities will include volleyball, softball, soccer, basketball, archery, campfire and a dance. The camp also has a pond for swimming and another for fishing. Off-campus activities are still in the planning stages, but plans are to include a day- or overnight-



Main lodge at Camp Hye Sierra, site of new United Youth Camp in California

hike, waterskiing and banana-boating on Pine Flat Lake, and canoeing or kayaking one of the nearby rivers. We also hope to offer special activities on a rotating basis annually—white-water rafting one year, horseback riding another and possibly rock climbing as well.

Final details will appear in the 2003 camp magazine, to be published next February. The camp director will be James Capo, pastor of the Tucson and Sierra Vista, Arizona, and El Paso, Texas, congregations.

James Capo

Youth United Begins Third Year

by David Treybig

The October-December 2002 issue of *Youth United* marks the beginning of the third year of publication of this Internet magazine specifically written for high school- and college-aged young people. Begun a little over three years ago by the Youth Education Team (then composed of Doug Horchak, chairman; Larry Greider; Clyde Kilough; Joel Meeker; and Jim and Judy Servidio), nine issues have now been produced.

Realizing that the high school- and college-aged youth of the Church would benefit from articles specifically geared to their interests and needs, the Youth Education Team asked for and received permission from the Council of Elders and home office to begin a magazine that would appear on the Internet every three months. From the outset, this publication was designed to be somewhat of a junior *Good News* as opposed to a newspaper or newsletter.

To launch this new magazine, the Youth Education Team assembled a team of people interested in youth and familiar with Internet publication to prepare the first issue that appeared in the fall of 2000. Victor Kubik and Mike Bennett were especially helpful, in that both were already working with *Virtual Christian Magazine*—also an on-line publication.

The premiere issue began with a welcome message from Les McCullough, former president of the United Church of God. His opening words were: "Welcome to all of you! Share with us *Youth United*—E-magazine. This is a new publication that focuses on preparing you, the youth of today, as tomorrow's leaders. In this day of electronic communication, it is imperative to commu-

nicate with you in your media—cyber-space. This is where the interest is. Paper and ink are rapidly losing place. You can download or browse this publication over the Internet anytime from anywhere.

"Here are some things we hope you get out of *Youth United*:

- God's way works—today!
- How to live God's way—today!
- God's awesome plan and your exciting future in it—tomorrow!

"To meet these goals, this on-line magazine will seek to help you, as teens and young adults, to better understand the realities of the world in which we live plus focus on the hope that God's Word provides for the future."

In addition to Mr. McCullough's introductory message, the first issue also featured articles on hope, careers, Darwinism, your destiny, breaking the rules and Q&A from young people. While the subjects of articles would change from issue to issue, the desire from the beginning was to have an article in every issue on education, as well as the Q&A.

Youth United develops

As the managing editor of this E-magazine, as we sometimes call it, I've had the privilege of watching the organization and staff develop. As succeeding issues were prepared, an archive section was added to the Web site and regular staff functions were established. Presently, Mike Bennett serves as copy editor, Ken Treybig as graphics editor and Chris Rowland does HTML conversion and posts the finished articles on the Internet. Andy Lausted and Michelle de Campos take care of Web design.

Over the last two years, the three-month production process has been fine-tuned. A new issue begins with our edi-

torial staff, composed of Mike Bennett, Larry Greider, Doug Horchak, Ken Treybig and myself, holding a teleconference to select a theme and make article assignments for the upcoming issue.

Article deadlines are one month prior to on-line publication. During this final month, articles are reviewed by James Capo, Todd Carey, Eric Evans, Paul Luecke, Joel Meeker, Jim Servidio and the editorial staff. After input from the reviewers has been incorporated into the articles, they go to Mike Bennett for copy editing, then to Ken Treybig for graphics and finally to Chris Rowland for posting on-line.

As an on-line magazine, the costs of production have been minimal. Each issue generates between 2,500 and 3,500 hits. While the Q&A consistently generates some of the highest number of viewings from issue to issue, articles on Darwinism, military service and war, dating and modesty have drawn the highest individual viewings ranging between 600 to 1,000 hits.

Because all articles are available via our Web archives, the number of hits for each issue and article continues to rise. In addition to these hits, we answer between a dozen and two dozen E-mails each month asking biblical questions. Doug Horchak, Larry Greider, Ken Treybig and I take monthly rotations answering these questions. It has been interesting to note that a significant number of these questions come from youth and adults without a Church of God background. Of course, all questions are answered irrespective of a person's age or background.

While our staff is pleased that the articles have been accessed so many times via the Internet, we are disappointed that only 15 to 20 percent of our target audi-



The October-December issue of *Youth United*, on-line at youthmagazine.org

ence (high school- through college-aged youth within the United Church of God) have seen *Youth United* on the Internet. The Youth Education Team discovered this percentage via surveys of young people at United Youth Camps during the summer of 2001.

It seems that young people use the Internet for visiting with friends or researching material but rarely for spiritual study. To better reach young people within the United Church of God, whom we recognize as our future leaders, the *Youth United* staff hopes that we will soon be able to send every person in this age group within our Church (and others who request it) a printed version of the magazine as well as making it available on the Internet.

The Latest Issue

The most recent October-December 2002 issue focuses on how we appear to others. Located on the Internet at www.youthmagazine.org, articles ad-

dress clothing, hair styles, body piercing, role models and how to treat others respectfully. The education article focuses on three simple things that almost guarantee financial success, and, of course, there is the ever-popular Q&A. See below for some of the questions and answers from the latest issue.

One of the goals of *Youth United* has been to broaden the number of authors of articles. We are especially looking for positive, encouraging articles from young people in their 20s and 30s. Some previously published examples of these kinds of articles include ones on skydiving, baptism, being held hostage, attending Ambassador Bible Center and breaking off a romantic relationship with someone not sharing the same religious beliefs.

If you are interested in writing an article, contact David Treybig via E-mail at David_Treybig@ucg.org. Suggestions for future articles are also welcomed. **UN**

Q&A From Youth United

Q. What does the Bible teach concerning abortion?

A. To answer this question, let's first consider some background material. Today, most people only look to their own human reason instead of the Bible for guidance in this area. As you may already know, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1973 (Roe vs. Wade) sparked a huge controversy. There is no issue since slavery that has so divided the population of the United States. The two opposing views on this issue are generally called "pro-life," meaning those who support the rights of the unborn, and "pro-choice" for those who say a woman should have control over her own body.

Many who favor allowing abortion have argued that abortions should be safe, legal and rare. Yet statistics show they are anything but rare. In the United States estimates of the number of babies aborted every day range from around 3,700 to over 4,000, amounting to nearly 1.5 million per year. Statistics also say that 93 percent of abortions occur not because of serious potential health prob-

lems or rape or incest, but because of social factors. The child is either unwanted or inconvenient.

The biggest area of debate in the abortion question is when life begins. Those who favor abortion might argue that it doesn't begin until sometime near birth, when the child could be viable on its own. Others point out that at the moment of conception a unique genetic package



comes into existence that contains everything that person will become—from height, size of feet and color of eyes, to factors such as whether he is predisposed to contract diabetes by age 50.

Growth and development after conception are rapid. Within 18 days a new heartbeat is there. At around three weeks, eyes, a spinal cord and digestive

system are forming. At around a month and a half, brain waves are detectable. By about two months, fingers and toes are beginning to show and by the 18th week, the fetus is moving and kicking.

While the Bible does not mention the word *abortion*, there are indications that God views the unborn as individuals. He told the prophet Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;

before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). God indicates He knew Jeremiah as a person and designated him for a special job extremely early in the gestation period. This implies "person-

hood," and God expressly forbids murder in the Sixth Commandment.

Additionally, Job said this about other people, "Did not He who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same One fashion us in the womb?" (Job 31:15). Job understood God to be at work in the process of human gestation in the womb.

God views human life as very valuable and the verses above indicate He views life as beginning at conception. So while He doesn't mention the modern issue of abortion by name in the Bible, these passages indicate that God would label abortion as a sin.

If you want to read more on the subject, you can read an article in our May/June 2000 *Good News* magazine titled, "The Abortion Quagmire: Who Will Speak for the Children?" It can be viewed on-line at www.ucg.org/articles/gn28/abortqua.html. We also have a Teen Bible Study Guide on this topic, available on-line at www.ucg.org/a/teenbs/vol6/volume_6-lesson_8.htm.

Q. How far can you go before you get married? Is it OK for a Christian teen to French kiss or "pet" (i.e. caress intimately) the one you love?

A. In our society, very poor examples are often set regarding relationships between men and women. Many in our society view premarital sex as "normal." As such, unmarried couples engage in the intimate activity that should be reserved for marriage. This includes passionate kissing and foreplay. This type of kissing and touching more often than not leads to intercourse. Of course,

this is contrary to God's teaching. In 1 Corinthians 6:18 it says, "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body." Clearly, in this verse, the apostle Paul is warning against the kind of intimate kissing and touching that can lead to sexual intercourse.

When it comes to dating, we encourage teenagers to not get romantically involved with someone of the opposite sex or have a "steady" boyfriend or girlfriend. Group dating and general social contact is much better for teens than pairing off with a specific individual. It is our general advice that one-on-one dating be reserved for the time people are ready (in respect to age, education and finances) to get married. In any event, the kind of passionate kissing and petting that you asked about should be reserved for marriage, where they can help build the special, intimate bond God designed.

An article titled, "Sex, Dating and You" by Tom Clark appeared in a previous edition of *Youth United*. This article addresses this subject in greater detail. The article may be read at youthmagazine.org/you/article.asp?volume=2&issue=4&article=sexanddating. **UN**



The Feast of **Tabernacles**

More Than 19,000 Celebrate the Feast With United

Feast 2002 Attendance Figures

Argentina	506
Australia	
Hobart, Tasmania.....	51
Merimbula, New South Wales.....	209
Noosa, Queensland.....	322
Perth, Western Australia.....	18
Barbados	77
Bolivia	44
Brazil	60
British Isles	254
Cameroon	31
Canada	
Kelowna, British Columbia.....	682
Mont-Sainte-Anne, Quebec.....	466
Regina, Saskatchewan.....	160
St. John's, Newfoundland.....	86
Colombia	91
Estonia	10
France	157
Germany	179
Ghana	
Accra.....	350
Kumasi.....	200
Takoradi.....	200
Guatemala	
Antigua.....	580
Esquipulas.....	202
Italy	187
Jamaica	357
Kenya	80
Malawi	56
Mauritius	2
Mexico	311
New Zealand	79
Nigeria	106
Peru	161
Philippines	
Baguio City.....	106
Davao City.....	293
Iloilo City.....	83
South Africa	252
Togo/Benin	n/a
Tonga	n/a
United States	
Bend-Redmond, Oregon.....	931
Branson, Missouri.....	1,187
Corpus Christi, Texas.....	576
Escondido, California.....	1,128
Gatlinburg, Tennessee.....	1,525
Hagerstown, Maryland.....	944
Jekyll Island, Georgia.....	1,063
Keystone, Colorado.....	643
Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii.....	374
Panama City Beach, Florida.....	1,834
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.....	1,363
Zambia	101
Zimbabwe	13
Shut-ins who received Feast tapes from the home office.....	541
TOTAL	19,231

Feast Cybercast (connections) ..131
 Note: Highest daily attendance figures. Actual registration at most sites was higher due to daily absenteeism. Cybercast listeners include some shut-ins counted above, so are not added into the total.

Argentina

Mendoza

This year 506 happy brethren from seven countries convened at the lovely Ejercito de los Andes Hotel complex in Mendoza, Argentina, for eight joyous days of festival observance. Timely messages and varied speakers from Chile, Argentina and the United States resounded important themes of the Feast, such as the reminder that we remain strangers and pilgrims in an alien society that Christ will soon replace with God's Kingdom.

Among the 20 American visitors was guest speaker and director of the Spanish work, Leon Walker, who attended the first half of the Feast here with his wife before traveling on to Trujillo, Peru, for the remainder.

It was especially inspiring that 13 people were baptized during the Feast; an encouraging indication that God is actively expanding His work in this region. It was equally inspiring to visiting Americans to encounter the congregations of brethren from nearby Chile. Due to solid past and present local leadership, these congregations have experienced very little attrition in the past 30 years.

All age groups are fully represented here.

Activities abounded throughout the Feast that included several dances; a special Ladies Night Spokesman Club banquet; a



Special music and a young soccer player in Mendoza, Argentina (photos by Juan Espinoza)

Ladies Breakfast in which women could display special homemade crafts, clothes and other artistry; a children's party; and a spectacular talent show that included a variety of colorful folk dances and costumes that represented the culture of several Latin American nations. All of these events, including the Family Day with basketball, volleyball (and of course, soccer), were located conveniently on the beautiful grounds of the hotel, only a few steps from the meeting hall.

A major component of this socially intimate Feast was the fact that all of the

brethren were able to eat all of their meals together in reinforced fellowship with conversations going on in Portuguese, English, Spanish and "Spanglish." Often various brethren provided singing entertainment with lively guitar accompaniment at different meals.

It soon became obvious that the hotel staff, waiters, desk clerks and hotel manager were overwhelmingly glad that we were all there and urged the Church to return the following year. Part of their reaction was based on the fact that the brethren made the hotel staff clearly realize that it was highly appreciated. On several occasions at banquet meals when the waiters entered into the dining hall, in marching procession with flaming desserts or large sides of beef, everyone applauded enthusiastically. In fact, the rapport between the Church and the staff was so good that before a prearranged soccer match between the hotel staff and the Church, Festival coordinator Saul Langarica twice jested with brethren about purposely losing in order to keep the hotel staff at a high level of euphoria. It worked.

Also, brethren took advantage of a local bus tour that took them to a chocolate factory and a winery. Several people went on a white-water rafting adventure through a deep canyon of the nearby Andes mountains which towered over them, and others arrived in Mendoza early to sample outstanding cuisine at several four- and five-star restaurants at remarkably inexpensive prices. With Argentina's runaway inflation, there were many extraordinary shopping opportunities in Mendoza that interested brethren.

An additional highlight for those who had never traveled into Argentina from nearby Santiago, Chile, was the bus excursion that wound its way through enormous alpine mountains laden with tons of sparkling snow. It was an experience to pass several open ski areas operating in winter conditions only to arrive in Mendoza where spring has sprung with new flowers, budding leaves on trees and migrating birds now arriving for their summer (seasons being the reverse of those north of the equator).

By their spiritual focus and attitudes, these local brethren appear to me to surely be part of God's jewelry of brethren as mentioned in Malachi 3:17. If you want to share convivial social and spiritual intimacy with some of the special "salt" of the earth, you may choose to visit the Feast in Mendoza in the near future.

Braden Veller

Australia

Hobart, Tasmania

The opening statement by Barry Williams, Festival coordinator for Hobart, Tasmania, set the scene for the whole Feast. Why are we here? We were reminded that these are the feasts of the Eternal. Rejoice! That was certainly the case for 51 brethren who came from many areas in Australia and also the United States.

A cake with the inscription "Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord—There He will teach us of His ways" was cut by Mr. and Mrs. Peter Eddington and shared with the brethren after the open-



Peter and Terri Eddington cutting traditional Festival cake in Tasmania

ing service. Good food and fellowship was also enjoyed by all those who attended the Sabbath brunch.

Continuing the theme, we were once again reminded that these are God's feasts. They are a time to be with God's people. We are expected to get together to be reminded of the Kingdom of God. Through the problems and challenges we have in this lifetime, we are training to be counselors, teachers and people who will encourage—people who will not want any to perish.

Urgency and being on a pilgrimage as an apprentice to Jesus Christ for life, in contrast to being a tourist taking short-cuts and lacking commitment, was emphasized in other messages. Having viewed the Feast video and then having the privilege of hearing a presentation from Peter Eddington gave us the sense of urgency that is needed to get this work done.

Continually throughout the Feast the speakers reminded us why we were there, who we were, what we were looking to in the future and what would ensure that we continued on this path. The Last Great Day messages gave us the hope and vision of the time when we shall be there to help wipe the fear from people's minds and to wipe the tears from their eyes. It was wonderful, uplifting spiritual food.

We enjoyed fine weather, with a covering of snow on Mt. Wellington, the destination of 37 people who enjoyed a Mystery Bus Tour. A barbecue, boat cruise and a shared potluck meal together on the evening after the Last Great Day rounded off the activities that took place. Special music was varied and much appreciated. The love and concern shown to all brethren was very evident throughout the Feast. There were many opportunities for fellowship.

Lea Evans

Merimbula, New South Wales

Words like "fabulous," "very special," "comforting," "stimulating," "open," "inspiring" and "encouraging" described God's Feast at Merimbula this year.

On the Last Great Day 209 attended. New South Wales pastor, Bruce Dean, baptized three new members. The under-35s took much responsibility for the smooth running of the Feast.

Wonderful weather, enthusiastic singing and Laisa Fungalai's beautiful floral arrangements enhanced the Feast for everyone. Organized activities included the inaugural Family Feast Dance, Progressive Dinner, Seniors' Mystery Tour, the Children's Party and the youth activity but many great get-togethers, such as an early morning fishing trip (60 fish caught!), were spontaneously arranged by Feastgoers.

There were positive comments from Merimbula residents. The skipper of the fishing boat commented that everyone was more intent on enjoying themselves



Children's chorale; above, Omar Afionni manning the media table in Merimbula

than on fishing! A patron at the club where services were held asked where "all these wonderful people" were from. Club management said that the UCG group was "well organized and easy to work with."

An interesting PowerPoint presentation by Peter Eddington on preaching the gospel was well-attended. Omar Afionni of the Australian Media and

Publishing Committee also displayed programs and brochures used to preach the gospel in Australia. Three workshops, previously held at a New South Wales Church Weekend, were repeated at Merimbula ("How to Give an Answer" by Leon Turner, "Redeeming the Time" by Geoff King and "Relating to People with Problems" by Mavis Stucci). The final word on this happy Feast (from Anne Sasse): "I'm full!"

Mavis Stucci

Noosa, Queensland

Fiery! Not the normal descriptor for a Feast site. But for 322 attendees at the Noosa Feast site, we ended the Festival "all fired up!" The Last Great Day afternoon service may have been shortened due to bush fires, but the attitude and spirit of members made this a most memorable Feast.

A diet of inspiring and instructive messages provided the spiritual feast. Discerning our time now in preparation for the future was a key point of Bill Winner's messages, and Dave Dobson provided valuable encouragement to our children, who are God's heritage. Christ's return to a physical and spiritual temple was the focus of a message by Reg Wright. And by walking and living with people, not ruling with a rod of iron, Bill Bradford connected our heart and mind today with our royal future.

The Welcome Cocktail Party and Dance kick-started the Feast for the young adults, and a seniors' bus trip took



The group meeting in Perth

Perth, Western Australia

The very pleasant Cocos Room at the Bel Eyre Motel in Perth was host to 18 of God's people for the Feast. The venue was made more special by a 2-meter (6-foot) high stunning flower arrangement supplied by Jenny Smith. Murray Barker arranged everything else perfectly. The enjoyment of the Feast was heightened by the arrival of five visitors.

The theme of the Feast was preparing to be servants in God's government. A spiritual feast was provided by sermons from Tom Burchard, David Sandland and videos. Mr. Burchard covered seven ways brethren can assist in God's work in preaching the gospel, highlight-

ing the material on display on the media table.

Perth brethren were blessed with special music from Lynn Sandland, Muriel Hacker and Tom Burchard. Activities involved what God's people like so much—eating and fellowship. A special treat was the picnic in Kings Park with stunning views of the river and city. Although the weather was generally cool with some much needed rain, we were blessed with a warm, sunny day for the picnic.

Peter Davidson



The group in Barbados

vices but also in our activities.

This was the rainiest Feast in Barbados since United started. A tropical storm passed over the island and caused us to think about the awesome power of God. That evening we had a get-acquainted party hosted by a family from Texas as the rains continued. However, our spirits were high as we enjoyed each other's company. We had a Caribbean pool party later in the week hosted by the local brethren and it rained. But the rains didn't dampen our spirits. We rejoiced at being able to be together as children of God.

Smaller Feast sites create a dynamic in which we can grow closer together as family. This year was no exception. In addition to the get-togethers mentioned above, a catamaran cruise was enjoyed by nearly everyone. And most attended a dinner-dance and show called "Tropical Spectacular." Also it was inspiring to see the young people from different areas forming new friendships over the eight-day period.

Between services on the Last Great Day, we walked down St. Lawrence Gap to a restaurant and were deluged with rain. The sun was shining before and afterwards, but during our walk, the heavens opened. That did not stop us from enjoying an outstanding lunch, which prepared us for the afternoon service and a great appreciation to our God for His invitation to His Festival.

Arnold J. Hampton

Bolivia

Las Carreras

All the Bolivian brethren together with visitors from Chile, Peru and the United States thank our Father for a wonderful Feast of Tabernacles at Las Carreras just south of the city of La Paz.

For eight days 44 brethren met in this out-of-the-way location where we received spiritual "meat in due season." We all shared a very positive brotherly atmosphere from the first day to the Last Great Day. All those with Festival responsibilities applied themselves with determination to the tasks at hand, and the results were very positive (Psalm 133).

Each day's activities began with a delicious breakfast. Then, in preparation for the "spiritual meal" of the day, locals and visitors alike had an energetic practice session to hone their talents for each service's special music.

The spiritual messages all had a certain continuity because they guided us on our journey out of this sinful world toward our beloved Father's Kingdom where His master plan of salvation through Jesus Christ will be a wonderful reality. Sermon topics included the attributes of an educator in the world tomorrow; why we come out of the

world to keep the Feast; events to take place at Christ's second coming; understanding our calling as related to the spiritual fires of refining and purification versus the all-consuming conflagration at the close of the era of man; the future government of God; biblical personalities and their spiritual principles those of us in the Church should emulate; goals of a Christian while awaiting the Kingdom; and what the future holds after the Millennium and the coming of the New Jerusalem.

Of course, this year's video on Christ-centered servant leadership had an emotional impact with its finale of the repentant sinner asking God's permission to enter His Kingdom.

An abundant Feast of physical food was also much in evidence. Each day different members were in charge of the food service. We enjoyed fine wines and other beverages from around the country along with a delicious barbecue. All was accompanied every day by excellent sunny weather.



Feastgoers in Bolivia (photo by Jenny Murillo)

Our afternoon talent show actually turned out to be a talent "night" when we lost electricity at the Feast site. It was a beautifully colorful production with a wide representation of regional costumes thanks to the extra efforts of all the participants. The highlight of the evening was the sing-along and dance where everyone rejoiced and had a wonderful time as commanded in the second part of Leviticus 23:40.

We could single out many individuals, both visitors and local members, who worked untiringly to make the Feast a success. We feel it to be more important, however, for their names to be recorded in the third heaven from where we await the coming of our King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ.

Rail Machicao Dick

British Isles

Grange-Over-Sands

"Beautiful." "Unspoiled by large discos and night clubs." "Locals helpful and friendly." "Peaceful, pastoral setting conducive to millennial feel and attitude." "An exceptional Feast experience."

These were typical of the positive comments made by most of those responding to a questionnaire at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles 2002 in Grange-Over-Sands, South Lakeland, England. With approximately 280 peo-

ple attending, we were very pleased to find that nearly every family had completed one of the questionnaires. The comments have been very helpful to us.

It is extremely difficult, however, if not totally impossible, to find a Feast site anywhere that will meet with everyone's complete approval. One person thought that London would be a perfect Feast site, but others don't want to be in a big city! But Grange, even with the usual drawbacks such as cost of parking, restaurants that don't stay open late, etc., got closer to that accolade than almost any other Feast site I can recall over the last 42 years.

With the invaluable help from the very professional Tourist Information Centre most people reported excellent accommodations, some having delightful cottages with the most wonderful views. One family said how fantastic it was that their "temporary dwelling" was on the edge of a lake with sheep in a field close by.

Remembering that we were there in Grange to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, to focus upon tomorrow's world when Jesus Christ will have returned and set up the government of God, we were appreciative of not only the millennial setting but also of the group of fine sermons and sermons presented.

The speakers had obviously worked hard and long upon them and given thought, prayer and meditation to their subjects. They all fell into a theme, that of our preparation to serve with Jesus Christ in the world tomorrow.

In addition to their sermons, optional Bible studies (which were very much appreciated and well attended) were also given by Aaron Dean, Vernon Hargrove and Bob Berendt. Other speakers were Bruce Anderson, Rex Spears, John Cafourek, David Mills, Gordon Barr, Frank Jarvis, John Jewell, Gerhard Marx, Dan Taylor and Paul Spenser. The offering messages on the Holy Days were given by David McDermott and Ron Crumbliss.

The choir, even though most of the members had never met each other before, did an excellent job under the experienced guidance of choir director Helen Richards. Mrs. Richards was also responsible for organizing the special music.

The family of God not only worships together, but plays together! A quiz night and talent show, a family dance to a local band "Tumbling Toms" and a caller, a social evening—all combined to accomplish that.

Many people took advantage of bus tours of the glorious landscape of the Lakeland area. An all-day tour included a brief journey on a restored steam railway line, then a trip across Lake Windermere on a lake steamer where the bus met the group to continue the tour before returning to Grange.

The mayor of Grange-Over-Sands, Aidan Smith, officially welcomed everyone at the service on the afternoon of the first Holy Day and then stayed for the rest of the service. Afterwards he said



Panorama at services in Noosa

in the scenery and attractions of the majestic Sunshine Coast hinterland.

A Family Day and sausage sizzle attracted many to the shores of Noosa River. The Banana Boat proved a hit as many "slipped" around the waterways at heart-stopping speeds. From the comical to the classical, the Talent Show proved an entertaining highlight, with a special guest appearance from "Forest Gump." And the Family Dance encouraged everyone to trip a little through a montage of music, including a few numbers from "Garth Brooks" (nee Dave West).

Festival coordinator Bill Bradford made special mention of the wonderful spirit that was evident among all who attended. While lamenting the sudden end to the Festival, nothing in this world can extinguish that spirit.

Stephen Clark

Barbados

The venue for the Feast in Barbados this year was the Southern Palms Beach Club in the popular St. Lawrence Gap of the parish of Christ Church. The facility is right on the ocean with a stunning and mesmerizing view. This is the third different location for the Feast in the last three years. Since tourism is a major industry, there are a number of facilities that can be used to observe the Feast.

Our high attendance was 77, with brethren coming from the United States, Canada, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and, of course, Barbados. We were blessed to have Mr. and Mrs. Doug Horchak for the first part of the Feast. His opening night message set the tone for focusing on God. We had a number of opportunities to do that, not only in ser-

how much he had appreciated the service.

Members made generous voluntary contributions to the community, providing a substantial donation to the town's new swimming pool. The town has been given a grant towards the cost, but has to match that sum. They were therefore engaged in fund raising to try to achieve it. In recognition of our contribution the name of the Church is to be engraved on a glass panel in the foyer of the swimming pool on completion. We felt this was a worthy enterprise as it serves the whole community, young and old, healthy and infirm alike.

An article about the Church's "convention" appeared in the town's local newspaper and was most positive with the headline "Town Welcomes Godly Visitors." And we were certainly welcomed!

John A. Jewell

Cameroon

Douala

This year we celebrated the Feast in the city of Douala, port city and economic capital of Cameroon. We were to have kept the Feast in Buea, but last-minute management changes made this impossible. Douala is a commercial city with a population of 3 million people. It was here that the first Portuguese explorers landed. They found many shrimp in the Wouri River, which they surmised the Rio Dos Camaroes, which means river of shrimp. This is how our country's name, Cameroon, came to be.

Thirty-one people were present for the Feast. Due to illness and distance some families were not able to attend.

This year we had no visitors. Our pastor, Joel Meeker, was not able to attend with us because of organization needs in France. We had Feast of Tabernacles sermon tapes throughout the Feast.

The video presentation on the inau-



Feastgoers in Cameroon

guration of the new home office building was very encouraging and stimulating. We were very happy to see this sign of progress in God's work.

The offering on the Holy Days was much higher than last year.

Festival activities included a social evening where we played games together including a Bible quiz, had Bible reading and awarded surprise gifts.

It was a very beautiful Feast and was enriching for all.

Moise Elisée Mabout

Canada

Kelowna, British Columbia

Sunny weather welcomed 682 brethren attending the Kelowna Feast site situated in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia.

Feastgoers enjoyed a host of activities during the Feast: from a leisurely boat cruise along the banks of the Okanagan Lake to sipping afternoon tea among the orchards overlooking a spectacu-



Above: Paul Suckling with children onstage in Quebec (photo by Kent Spiry) Below: In Kelowna, young people shine in their crowns (photo by Jerry Jantzen)

lar view of the valley, wine tasting on various winery tours, spending a busy family day afternoon at Scandia Golf and Games, or learning how to promote the gospel using the Internet at an Internet seminar hosted by Dan Deininger, cofounder of the Churches of God Cyber Auxiliary.

Sound technician, Ron Whedon (not a member) said, "If you are still attracting young people and stirring them in the right direction, you must be doing something right." The lead singer of the band Special Blend, Mary Ann Bishop, said, "the family dance has restored my faith in young people."

I am sure there were many miracles performed by God during the Feast. Al Segall, from Sedro Woolley, Washington, relates his miracle while coming to the Feast. Driving on the Coquihalla in windy, rainy conditions, he was distracted for a moment, and his car slammed into the concrete divider. Crunching and screeching, he almost lost control of the car. Al said, "Everything moved in slow motion and finally I got control. We later stopped at the tollbooth to survey the damage. I took my wife out to look as well, as I could not believe my eyes—

nothing, not a scratch. An angel turned this into the best Feast ever."

Jan Jantzen

Mont-Sainte-Anne, Quebec

"Magnifique," "splendid," "memorable" would be words to describe the 2002 Feast in Quebec. There were 358 celebrating opening night with a high of 466, an average more than 100 over capacity. Two overflow rooms handled these excellent numbers.

The first days greeted us with humidity and overcast skies, but with our expected pattern of divine blessing, the weather cleared for the first activity day and thereafter. High attendances at services and activities were a feature and reflected how content, joyous and wholehearted were Feastgoers. Festival choirs and musicians added much to the wonderful atmosphere.

For many the family dance with some dancers in costume was a highlight. For others it was the diverse talents of the variety show, the family day games or the teen bowling activity. The whale-watching tour was rewarded with sighting 52 whales. The river dinner cruise on the Saint Lawrence Sea-

way was an enchanting evening with music and dancing.

Adding to fine fellowship was a seniors' brunch with a sing-along of old time favorites. And contributing richly to the color and togetherness of the Feast were our many U.S. visitors.

The following words of appreciation from a visiting elder sum it up:

"Excellent Feast site. Positive uplifting atmosphere. Beautiful outdoor surroundings. Messages very meaningful and helpful. Organization of the entire Feast was well done. We enjoyed the Feast very much."

Graemme Marshall

Regina, Saskatchewan

One of the newest and smallest Feast sites produced a big work this year. The generosity of the 160 brethren attending the Feast of Tabernacles in Regina, Saskatchewan, was magnified. One example was the donations given to local agencies.

"We collected about 120 stuffed animals this Feast, which we gave to three women's shelters and the critically ill children's ward at the hospital," said assistant Festival coordinator Lloyd Tee-taert. "The hospital said, 'How did you know we needed these? We just put out the request three days ago.'"

"We also donated 350 pounds of food and about \$900 in cash to the food bank. They told us our donation couldn't have come at a better time."

There were several activities during the Feast, including tours of underground tunnels, a dinner theatre, a pitchfork fondue and a country dance.

Regina also hosted an estimated 30 to 50 brethren daily through the Internet.



Festival coordinator Glen White with the children's chorale in Regina (photo by Ken Kerr Jr.)

E-mails from these scattered brethren gave the Feast a warm sense of extended family.

The motto for the province of Saskatchewan is "Multi E Gentibus Vires," which means, "From many peoples, strength." It could have applied to the Regina Feast. As Festival coordinator Glen White said, "Everyone pulled up their socks and did what they could. It was a tremendous Feast."

Ruth Kerr

St. John's, Newfoundland

This year 85 enthusiastic Feastgoers attended the Feast in St. John's, Newfoundland. The attendance was good, as everyone seemed to be in good health and good spirits.

The sermons and sermonettes were excellent and the theme of the Feast video was evident in the material that speakers provided.

The planned activities were well attended. This year on the evening of the first day we had a get-acquainted dinner that was attended by all. According to comments we received, it was an excellent idea as it got everyone together at the beginning of the Feast in a more informal atmosphere.

Sixty people went on board the schooner *Scademia* for a tour from scenic St. John's Harbour to the area off Cape Spear, the most easterly point in North America. No whales were sighted, but everyone was having so much fun with the view of the rugged shoreline and live entertainment on board, combined with beautiful weather, that no one seemed to mind.

The six children and teens attending the site received gifts after ser-

monies on the day of the family outing.

On Thursday, 78 people attended the Family Day at Lavrock Centre. They enjoyed lunch of chicken strips and wings and cod, along with vegetable plates and beverages, followed later in the evening by a hot turkey dinner. In between lunch and dinner people enjoyed walking in the pleasant fresh air and country setting, followed by a sing-along. A few took advantage of the beautiful lake to try their hand at canoeing. In their enthusiasm, a couple of canoes were overturned,

but it all made for a fun time as the water wasn't too cold, and the day was warm. After dinner a local band provided music for a dance. It was hard to leave at 10 p.m., as everyone was having a great time.

According to the housing survey, most were pleased with their accommodations. The staff at the Best Western gave us a card of appreciation and said they enjoy having us there.

It was a real joy to have the Kubiks with us for the Feast. They felt it was a very relaxing time. Victor Kubik gave a slide presentation during the seniors' lunch that helped us appreciate how greatly blessed we are in this part of the world.

Our amplifier expired during the



Festival coordinator David Smith enjoys the boat tour with Sal Fattoross

Feast and some of the U.S. brethren suggested asking for donations to buy a new one. We had originally planned to ask for a donation for LifeNets, but how could we say no to such good intentions? Thanks to the generosity of God's people we were able to buy a

Feast Profile: Meet Stella White

In Regina's Balaton Ball Room, in the third row from the front, third seat from the aisle, sat an almost 90-year-old lady. More than that, she would be seen almost every day, the third singer from the left in the Feast choir, a delight to behold as she wholeheartedly sang.

Her name is Stella S. White, and she lives in her own home in Spokane, Washington. Her husband, Valden, was a minister and died in 1997. She is



Stella White

one of 12 children, seven of whom are still living. She has seven grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.

She has a son, Glen White, a minister who coordinated the Regina Feast site, and a daughter, Maureen, who lives in Washington state.

Stella White has been in the Church since 1957 and has been a deaconess since 1963. She attends with a congregation of about 100 in Post Falls, Idaho.

Jack Smith, Fargo, North Dakota

Estonia

For the sixth consecutive year, a small Feast site was held in Tartu, Estonia. Nestled between Russia and the Baltic Sea, this is the most northern Feast site. The days were sunny and warm with crisp nights. Services were conducted in

the conference room of the Pallas Hotel. This year Darlene Reddaway translated into Russian and Imbi Kuusksalu translated into Estonian. Imbi is an English teacher who began attending services after hearing an ad for *The Good News* magazine on Pere (Family) Radio last winter.

The messages paralleled creation week. The steps of creation were shown to have their future counterpart in the spiritual re-creation God will accomplish with the return of Christ.

The entire group went to dinner together almost every night. This gave the opportunity to discuss the sermons and other facets of the Kingdom of God and form lasting friendships.

Darlene Reddaway organized a day trip to Riga, the capital of the neighboring country of Latvia. This time spent together was very gratifying.

While small in number, this part of the world had a witness about the abundant future in God's Kingdom. We all learned to more deeply respect our God.

Johnnie Lambert



Scenes from St. John's (from top): Ann and Walt Tannert, local elder from Arizona; Steve Allwine speaking while Amanda Schmidt focuses on the camera; Mr. and Mrs. Garland Ropson of Newfoundland celebrate their 40th anniversary at the Feast (photos by Vic Kubik)



new amplifier and also donate \$575 to LifeNets.

According to one member who has been in the Church for 31 years, "It was the best Feast ever!"

David and Blanche Smith

Colombia

Santa Marta

Ninety-one people gathered once again in the Atlantic coastal city of Santa Marta to keep a Feast to the Eternal. This annual occasion brought brethren together from every corner of Colombia, as well as from Barquisimeto, Venezuela, for the purpose of "learning to fear God." As always, God's protection, which allowed us to arrive safely at the Feast site, was one of the outstanding aspects of the Feast. A consistent theme of the messages was the need to bear fruit in our lives and to remain steadfast in the faith we've been given.

It was a wonderful time of joy and rejuvenation, of rest and Christian fellowship. Among the activities that contributed to our rejoicing were a children's party, an informal talent show and an afternoon of family games. God, in His mercy, also allowed three new members to be added to His family and to begin the journey toward perfection and eternal life.

It was with sadness that we said our good-byes and went our separate ways after the Feast, leaving behind the wonderful time spent together. We headed home trusting in God's protection, and He faithfully guarded us from the many dangers and saw us safely and soundly to our homes.

Now, more determined than ever to endure to the end, our prayer to God is "Your Kingdom come soon!"

Eduardo Hernandez

France

Nouan-le-Fuzelier

Unity, harmony and joy were in the atmosphere during the Feast in bucolic Nouan-le-Fuzelier, France. The 157 people attending the site from French Europe, Martinique, the British Isles, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States



Bernard Audoin gives sermon at Feast in France; dance troupe teaches regional dances at folklore evening

especially appreciated being able to spend so much time together since services, lodging, meals and many activities were on the same site.

The messages, alternating in French and English, were very encouraging and many followed the Festival video theme of serving and helping. Other highlights of the Feast included a folklore evening where we were able to learn regional dances; a wonderful talent show with



music, magic and laughter; and excursions to some of the most beautiful Renaissance chateaux in France, including Blois, Chambord, Chenonceau, Villandry and the manor where Leonardo da Vinci spent his last years. A wine tasting was also offered.

The United Church of God-France had its annual association meeting during the festival. We also had an interactive Bible study for French-speaking members on how young people can prepare for marriage and how married people can strengthen their marital relationships. Young adults at the Feast were invited to a PowerPoint presentation on the United Youth Corps international service projects, and to a roundtable discussion on how the Church can effectively serve our young adults.

The feeling of unity and fellowship among brethren of different languages, cultures and ages was remarkable.

Pre-Feast Tour of France

Before the Feast 49 visitors had an extra experience this year: a four-day tour of sites of interest in France. Partic-



ipants met in Paris on the afternoon prior to the start of the Day of Atonement. On Monday, Atonement services were held at the tour group's hotel in

Paris. At the end of Atonement the group went by metro (the Paris subway) to the famous la Coupole restaurant for dinner.

On Tuesday the tour group went to the top of the Eiffel Tower, visited the Arc de Triomphe, walked down the Champs Elysees and had lunch in the Latin Quarter where university students lived during the Middle Ages. After lunch the group visited the Cathedral of Notre Dame and spent two hours visiting the Orsay museum to see impressionist paintings. That evening the group ate at another famous restaurant, the Train



Members from St. Louis, Missouri, congregation in front of the chateau of Chenonceau; pre-Feast tour at Arc de Triomphe (photos by Joel Meeker)

Bleu, whose baroque-style decoration is classed as a French national monument.

On Wednesday, after a late start, we traveled by coach to Bayeux in Normandy where we saw the 950-year-old Bayeux tapestry showing the history of the 1066 Norman conquest of England. Dinner was taken in the seaside village of Arromanche, which played an important role in the June 1944 invasion.

Thursday we visited several sites of interest on the D-Day beaches including the museum of Arromanche, the American military cemetery at Colleville St-Laurent, which is located just above Omaha Beach where the bloodiest fighting occurred on June 6, 1944. We also visited the Pointe du Hoc, a German cliff fortification taken after high casualties by an American Ranger unit. We had lunch in Saint Mere Eglise, which was a bloody U.S. parachute drop site on the night of June 5.

From there we drove down to Mont Saint Michel, a breathtaking fortified village on a rocky hill in a large bay. At highest tide, the mount becomes an island, completely surrounded by seawater. We visited the fantastic abbey on the top of the rock, and had free time to stroll through the narrow streets of the village where we also had dinner. We spent the night in a 450-year-old hotel.

Friday after a group photo at Mont Saint Michel we drove to the Feast site and had time to settle in before the opening night service.

Joel Meeker

Germany

Schluchsee

The Feast in Germany was once again held in Schluchsee, located in Germany's beautiful Black Forest. With an attendance high of 179, brethren from seven countries celebrated God's Feast with inspiring messages and plenty of good food and fellowship. The opening service this year was highlighted by sev-

eral scripture readings and beautiful special music. After the opening services, brethren were served a "welcome drink" (champagne and orange juice) to enjoy while they renewed old friendships and began new ones. Services were held in German with simultaneous English translations provided.

Messages focused on the Kingdom of God, preparing for rulership with a Christ-centered servant leadership approach, perseverance, becoming like little children and God's work of salvation. Brethren found the messages to be educational and encouraging, helping to focus on the wonderful world ahead, with practical instruction for living today.

This year the children participated in three special Bible classes held throughout the Feast. The children were also invited to join the children's choir, which performed once during Church services and once during the variety show. The annual children's party was held on Sunday, which included games, crafts and kegling (German version of bowling).

The weather was mixed this year, with a few days of rain, sun and even snow! The two days of snow made for a beautiful view of the forested hills.

The teens, young adults and those young at heart enjoyed an afternoon of go-cart racing. Each participant had two opportunities to fine tune their driving skills and improve their overall time on the course. Later in the week, the teens and young adults also enjoyed an afternoon of volleyball. An interactive Bible study titled "Jesus Christ Is Returning. . . What Does He Have in Store for You?" was also conducted one morning for the young adults. They appreciated the vision and focus they received by discussing God's plan.

On Tuesday, 50 Feastgoers participated in a bus tour which took them through the Black Forest on their way to a cuckoo clock museum and a historical village. Alois and Franz, the Black Forest duo, once again provided music for the family dance, which kept many on their feet dancing until after midnight. The annual variety show was well attended, and both young and old shared their talents!

The Feast concluded with the traditional farewell evening. Brethren left the Feast energized for the next year, looking forward to returning in 2003.

Lisa Fenchel

Ghana

Over 700 people met for the first time as members of the United Church of God in Ghana, in West Africa. Last year they kept the Feast as members of the Remnant Church of God which is now UCC.

There were three Feast sites in each of the three main cities, Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi, with an attendance of 350, 200 and 200 respectively. The meeting halls in both Accra and Takoradi were within walking distance of the Atlantic Ocean.

Senior pastor Melvin Rhodes visited all three sites along with his wife, Diane, and two of their three children. For the Rhodes family, it was their first visit to Ghana since leaving their home there in

1990. All commented on how much the country has developed and improved in the last 12 years.

All three sites had fun activities including soccer, board games and cards. On some days all the members were able to eat together, which only added to the enthusiasm of the members, to whom observance of the Feast of Tabernacles is still new, this being only the third time that members have known about and kept the Feast.

Melvin Rhodes and Richard Dua

Guatemala

Antigua

The members of the United Church of God in Guatemala celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in the colonial city of Antigua some 30 kilometers (19 miles) outside Guatemala City.

With great joy 580 persons attended, among whom were visiting brethren from the United States, Mexico, El Salvador and Honduras. Regardless of nationality, we rejoiced before our great God as one body during this last festival season of the year.

The weather was superb with just enough rain to keep our meeting hall cool and comfortable—that is to say we had natural air conditioning! The sermons and sermonettes were very inspiring and encouraged us to unite as a family while looking forward to this earth's glorious future under the government of the Son of God.

Activities were varied and offered something for every age group so that all could experience the flavor of the Feast: a dance for the 150 young people in attendance (40 percent of the population of Guatemala is under 15); a ladies' breakfast; a seniors' breakfast; a Spokesmen's Club ladies' night; a special children's party and a special activity for married couples. The happiness of each group was evident during the Talent Night program.

The closing sermon showed us God's ultimate awe-inspiring plan for mankind and gave us the strength to face the problems and difficulties as we return to our everyday lives in this world—a society ruled by Satan, but not for long.

Finally, we all—both young and old—said our good-byes being very encouraged and looking forward eagerly to the time when we can see each other again. We will be faithful in the battle while awaiting Christ's return to replace completely this world's governments. Until then, we will continue to pray, "Your Kingdom come!"

Luis Mundo Tello

Esquipulas

Esquipulas, a small city surrounded by the mountains of eastern Guatemala, was the site of the Feast of Tabernacles for 202 brethren from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

Hurricane Isidore was our unwitting ally during the Feast, bringing us rain at night to cool and refresh our daytime hours. As a result, we enjoyed temperatures averaging between 18 and 19 degrees Celsius.

From opening night to the Last Great Day, God showered His love upon us by

means of the thought-provoking and hope-filled sermons of His ministry. The messages reviewed God's plan for humanity and showed us how to be truly happy within the framework of His divine instructions.

These pleasant peaceful days offered many opportunities to spend time with people from all age groups. It was so enjoyable to see parents and grandparents accompanied by children and grandchildren doing everything together—eating, taking walks and going to services. In like manner, it was very rewarding to see the Church youth enjoying and involving themselves in so many Church activities and the joy expressed by the ladies of all ages as they took part in their activities.

During one day Julián Weston and his wife, Miriam, delighted us with a piano and voice recital. There was also a Family Day, several hikes in the nearby mountains, soccer games and water activities in one of the swimming pools.

A true attitude of service was evident among all the membership in such things as the beautiful floral arrangements, the care and upkeep of the meeting hall, punctuality in arrival at services and participation in special music.

One of the most touching events during the Feast occurred when the members in one of the hotels presented the owners with a card signed by everyone. It was a moment of mutual appreciation where no words were spoken, but the tears in everyone's eyes said it all.

Near the end of the Feast we were given yet another reason to rejoice: Four young people were baptized after having decided to follow the "narrow and difficult way" in these uncertain times.

A message that seemed to stick in the minds of all was the point of one particular sermon that might be paraphrased thusly: "We all belong exclusively to God, but God doesn't belong exclusive-



Special music in Esquipulas (photo by Cesar Guzmán)

ly to us." There is a great lesson for us in these words—one we all need to assimilate during the coming year.

We may have to return to the world, but we will continue to look forward to God's Kingdom.

Patricia Cisneros de Santos and Carolina Márquez

Italy

Tuscany

Our Feast site in beautiful Tuscany had an attendance of approximately 200 participants, representatives of (in alphabetical order): Argentina, Canada, France, Germany, Ghana, Holland, Italy, Martinique, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru,

Romania, the United Kingdom and the United States.

We were a small but enthusiastic group of God's people enjoying heartfelt sermons, good food and a special fellowship with one another. We were living proof that language need not be a barrier to getting to know and love one another in Jesus Christ. Your Italian brethren would like to express their heartfelt thanks to all those who have celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles with them in Italy this year.

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

At our Feast site the weather was nice



Pretty representatives of three continents exemplified the unity of America, Africa and Europe during the Feast in Tuscany, Italy (photo by Grace Rothenbacher)

and warm, when storms and floods were affecting many parts of northern Europe. The brethren could participate in cultural tours to famous historical places like Florence, Pisa, Siena and San

Gimignano. Social activities like the talent show and the dance gave all Feast participants the opportunity to come together in more Christian fellowship.

The Feast in Italy also provided the opportunity for potential members who live too far away from a congregation to be baptized. We give our warm welcome to Natalie Vermeer and Marlene Tasale! Brand-new spiritual brethren not only represent the fruit of God's work in them, but in the entire Church and through the Church as well.

The generous Feast offerings also gave the Church in Italy a tremendous help in publishing the true gospel as a witness to the Italian people and nourishing the called ones here. The offerings were 9 percent higher than last year's Feast. We would like to express our deep gratitude. We thank all Feast-goers for their generous offerings to support the preaching of the truth in Italy.

Departing from the brethren is always a moving and unforgettable experience. After the Feast many brethren have written to us in appreciation. Yet we are the ones who need to sincerely express our



Kingston and Ocho Rios, Jamaica, congregations during Feast 2002

gratefulness for their brotherly presence, friendship and support. There are not adequate words to thank all those who have served and contributed in various ways to make the Feast truly memorable to God's glory and honor. We hope that even more brethren will attend the Feast in Italy next year.

Carmelo Anastasi

Jamaica

Ocho Rios

The tropical tranquillity of Ocho Rios, Jamaica, was the eight-day spiritual home for more than 300 brethren this year. Once again, the Feast of Tabernacles was held at the beachside Renaissance Jamaica Grande Hotel.

Despite tropical storms that disrupted weather at the start and end of the Feast, brethren were able to enjoy rejuvenating sermons, fellowship and activities. All 13 speakers inspired, challenged and refreshed brethren with sermons and sermonettes looking forward to life in the world tomorrow and expounding on living God's way today. A wonderful array of special music also enriched the services, performed by a combined choir, the Jamaica choir, children's choir and various visiting and local members and young people. Attendance reached a high of 357 on Youth Day.

In between storms, brethren enjoyed

the Family Fun Day on the beach and a tour of the area that included a climb up Dunn's River Falls. Visitors joined together with the Jamaican brethren to put on a talent show, one of the entertainment highlights of the Feast.

Gary Smith, assistant Festival coordinator, described the Feast as relaxing and spiritually rewarding, teaching God's truth in a beautiful environment. Paul Fisher, pastor of the Kingston, Jamaica, congregation, commented that the messages were thought-provoking and challenging; while Doug Horchak, pastor of the Dallas, Texas, congregation and member of the Council of Elders, described the Festival atmosphere as one of relaxation and love.

Resort staff continue to give favorable reports of UCG guests, who have met at the hotel for three years.

For more about the effects of the storms on the brethren, see "Jamaican Brethren Weather the Storm," below.

Janice Lynn Mather

Kenya

Njoro

Seventy-two members gathered from throughout Kenya and Tanzania and were joined by eight international members (seven Americans and one Italian) to observe the Feast of Tabernacles in Njoro, a small town located on Kenya's

Jamaican Brethren Weather the Storm

Brethren enjoyed the Feast at the Jamaica Grande Resort despite the effects of two hurricanes in two weeks. They had a lot of rain from hurricane Isidore, but no activities were canceled.

The Last Great Day hurricane, Lili, threatened the island. Jamaica suffered millions of dollars of damage from flooding and high winds and three people were killed. We did have heavy rains on the Last Great Day, but the hotel did not sustain any damage. God protected us and the hurricane did not hit the area.

The members of the Kingston, Jamaica, congregation were spared a near tragedy on Sunday, Sept. 29. Brethren were returning to Kingston, but could not take the normal route, a narrow pass over a river in a deep valley which was impassable because of the heavy rain.

The brethren took an alternate route that seemed safe, but toward the end of

the journey the bus that was taking most of the brethren encountered water up to the top of the tires. This resulted in extensive damage to suitcases, clothing and boxes that were in the cargo section underneath the bus.

Several of the automobiles with other brethren that took the same route also experienced flooding. The vehicle that was being driven by Church elder Leeford Burke stalled because water entered the engine and the cab, reaching Carole Burke's lap. The family was rescued by people in the area who had to pull the automobile out of harm's way.

Several other families, including Sharon Boyne and Fitzroy Ferguson, also suffered water damage to their vehicles, but thankfully God was merciful and there was no loss of life. God really protected His people during these frightening experiences.

Kingsley O. Mather

Mau Escarpment of the Great Rift Valley. Njoro is located approximately 103 miles (167 kilometers) by road (a four-hour drive) from Nairobi, the capital of Kenya.

The members heard inspiring messages concerning the Feast of Tabernacles such as reconciliation to God, four elements of a kingdom, being a light to the world, listening to God, judgment and learning from God's creation. Nineteen individuals also began counseling for baptism. Many of the members commented that this was one of their best Feasts ever.

All the brethren lodged at the Agricultural Resource Center of Egerton University, a facility with beautifully planted and maintained grounds. Members enjoyed encouraging and positive fellowship and dined together in an open-air restaurant. Activities at the Feast included a visit to Egerton Castle (an old English estate of Lord Egerton, founder of the University), an adventurous hike to Njoro Caves, Family Christian Club, Bible Bowl evening and numerous educational and entertainment videos.

One of the highlights of the Feast was a trip to Lake Nakuru National Park where many of the brethren saw flamingos, storks, giraffes, baboons, monkeys, impalas, gazelles, cape buffaloes, elephants, rhinos, lions and leopards.

After the Feast, the international brethren had the opportunity to experience the wonder of the unique creatures and breathtaking landscapes of Africa by going on safari in the Masai Mara and Amboseli National Park. The members enjoyed numerous game drives viewing hippos, crocodiles, baboons, exotic birds, cheetahs, wildebeests, zebras, elephants, lions, leopards, warthogs, hyenas, jackals, cape buffaloes, gazelles and various antelopes.

Dave and Dorrie Baker



Brethren at the Feast in Njoro, Kenya

Malawi

Nkopola Lodge

Tikulandirani means "welcome" in Chichewa, the most commonly spoken language in Malawi. The 56 brethren who congregated at the Malawi Feast site made each other feel most welcome and appreciated. This was the first time since the inception of the United Church of God that our members were able to observe the Feast in Malawi.

Nkopola Lodge, which served as the Festival site, is located next to the southern regions of Lake Malawi. It is set right on beaches of shimmering white sand, palm groves and coconut trees. Bird life abounds, and the population of fish eagles (similar to the American bald eagle) on the shoreline is said to be the densest in Africa.

Our members did not stay at Nkopola Lodge, but in tents



Choir in Malawi; above, Chonde family fellowship after services (photos by Derrick Pringle)

either supplied by the lodge or tents they were able to take along themselves. Because of the mild tropical climate and lack of rainfall at that time of the year, this turned out to be an acceptable arrangement.

The spiritual food was supplied by videotaped sermons sent from the home office, and from visiting minister André van Belkum who was accompanied by his wife, Elize. It was a blessing to meet in an air-conditioned hall situated within a minute's walk from where the members were staying.

Special activities included a three-hour boat ride to an island on the lake inhabited by a variety of marine birds. Then a special evening of feasting was arranged, with an extra spread of meat and vegetables. Nobody left feeling hungry! These events were made possible through donations from churches and individuals from overseas areas. These donations also

covered a portion of the transport and accommodation costs of the members, who greatly appreciated this generous assistance.

This was truly a Feast characterized by an abundance of rejoicing, fellowship and spiritual nourishment.

Before departing, we made provisional reservations for next year's Feast.

André van Belkum

Mauritius

Two of us met every day of the Feast as well as on the Last Great Day to view video sermons sent from the home office. Although these sermons were

from last year's Feast, they were excellent, truly "meat in due season."

Since there were nine tapes (including the Feast 2002 video), we viewed two sermons on the first day with a home-prepared lunch in between.

We had also received audiotapes of sermons in French sent by Joel Meeker. For convenience, we decided to listen to these on our time.

In keeping with the spirit of the Feast of Tabernacles, we had lunch at excellent restaurants twice during the week, including the Last Great Day.

Suren Proag

Mexico

Guanajuato

The Feast of Tabernacles 2002 in Mexico was celebrated in the beautiful colonial city of Guanajuato, capital of the state that goes by the same name. Guanajuato is located about 230 miles northwest of Mexico City, the nation's capital.

Total attendance at the Feast site was 311 (including about 25 visiting brethren from the United States). All of us enjoyed a memorable Feast 2002, with delicious food, clean fun, family-oriented activities and warm and loving fellowship, the most important activity being the spiritually uplifting sermons.

Most days were beautiful, sunny and bright, with the exception of one day of rain, which did not prevent the scheduled activity (a tour of nearby San Miguel de Allende, last year's Feast site) from taking place.

The activities were great, including a *callejoneada*, a street party which is a traditional activity in Guanajuato. It consists of a walk in the evening through the colonial streets of the city, with soft drinks for the adults and young children and a group of traveling musicians, called *estudiantina*. All the participants very much enjoyed this activity.

Other activities included a women's

breakfast, a children's party, a family day at a nearby swimming pool resort, a video of the 2002 Mexican summer camp with pizzas and soft drinks for the young people, a youth dance with hamburgers and soft drinks, a senior citizens' dinner with live music and gifts for all the elderly and a Mexican costume dinner and dance with live music (called *Noche Mexicana*—"Mexican night"). This activity was very special. The hall was beautifully decorated, and it included an exposition of arts and crafts of the region, as well as an outstanding performance of typical Mexican dances by the professional dance group of the University of Guanajuato. The "Mexican Night" proved to be the highlight of the activities.

On the spiritual side, which is the main purpose of the Feast, there were daily Bible studies in the morning with a variety of topics for the whole family (children, young people, singles, adults, married couples, senior citizens) and daily services (two on the Holy Days) with inspirational special music, sermons and sermons. There was a Bible class for the children every day of the Feast. The sermons and Bible studies covered important topics, including: "Learning From the Past," "God's Holy Days," "Being Equipped as Saints in God's Service" (Feast video), "Knowing God," "Blessed Are the Meek," "Drug Addiction and Alcoholism," "Lessons of Temporary Dwellings," "Health and Care of Senior Citizens," "Knowing the Eternal," "The Book of the Great White Throne Judgment," "The Feast and Our Earthly Pilgrimage," "The Restoration of the

Earth," "Christian Principles of Dating," "Bible Study on Marriage and Sex," "The Meaning of the Last Great Day" and many relevant and inspiring sermons.

The highlight on the spiritual side was the baptism of 12 new children of God that took place during the Feast.

All together, the activities, the great abundance of warm and loving Christian fellowship and the spiritual banquet provided by daily Bible studies and services, focused on the greatness of our loving God and the majestic purpose portrayed by His wonderful and most inspiring Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day. As a result, the Feast turned out to be a spiritual success. Now we look forward to the coming Feast of Tabernacles 2003!

Pablo Dimakis

Nigeria

Benin City

Members of the United Church of God met at the Edo Hotel in Benin City, Edo State, in the southern part of Nigeria, to observe the Feast of Tabernacles 2002. The Edo Hotel, located right in the middle of Benin City, is a quiet, comfortable hotel with many suites and chalets scattered all over the same compound. The Feast site was approximately a five-hour drive from Lagos, the commercial center and largest city of Nigeria. Nigeria, a former British colony in West Africa, has an approximate population of about 120 million people.

The majority of members attending

Teen Studies Focus on Feast and God's Kingdom

At the Feast this year every U.S. and Canadian Feast site, as well as many international sites, had a teen Bible study.

These studies were conducted by pastors and elders who were asked several weeks in advance to prepare these studies. The presenters were asked to participate in a teleconference call about a month before the Feast to share topics, approaches and then give comments. This allowed for ample preparation time, as well as feedback and comments from the group to further sharpen each study. The studies are intended to be focused and rather interactive, which helps make them more interesting.

Topics this year included prayer, righteous judgment, a teen's personal relationship with God and how the problems teens face today will be solved by God's coming Kingdom. Several of the studies had a common theme of making wise decisions and standing up for what you believe. Examples of Daniel, Abraham and Sarah were used at various Feast sites.

Most of the teens who attended responded favorably, with many presenters getting "thank you's" for the studies. One teen commented about how much he appreciated the way the

study challenged his preconceived notions, causing him to reconsider how God desires him to live.

Parents have also given positive feedback. One parent commented



Teen Bible study in Branson, Missouri (photo by Aaron Greider)

about observing her teen becoming more earnest about prayer and a relationship with God after the study. Another parent suggested more studies for the teens—perhaps two or three during the Feast!

The primary focus of the Feast of Tabernacles is for each of us to more fully "learn to fear the LORD your God always" (Deuteronomy 10:23). The teen studies are another way of doing that, and helping parents with their God-given responsibility to teach and train their children and teenagers.

Thomas L. Clark



Ghana to be with us as well. His two messages were very much appreciated. The remaining messages and Bible studies were given by Bruce Gore from the United States. The messages were very rich and inspiring. Singing was enthusiastic. Special music was superb—



Scenes from the Feast in Nigeria. Right, Ezekiel Alimi and Bruce Gore at the entrance to Edo Hotel

had to travel from Lagos where the country's international airport is also located. We learned later that a road-block and robbery took place on the major highway we all traveled on about one hour or less after most of us had passed by. God was watching over us!

The staff at the Edo Hotel witnessed a different kind of people using their facilities. Here was a group of smiling, happy people who were not demanding, but spreading their joy to all who came into contact with them. They were God's chosen who had come to celebrate their calling and God's plan of salvation as revealed in His annual Holy Days.

A larger than expected crowd assembled for morning services in the spacious meeting hall to sing praises to God and listen to messages about His perfect plan for all nations. There were 106 in attendance on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles and 101 on the Last Great Day.

A news crew from the state television authority, NTA Benin, showed up right after morning services. They interviewed Bruce Gore and some members asking questions about the origin and meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. The interview was aired the next evening on the local television station.

The following day, a man called the station wanting to know how to find where this group of people were meeting who were keeping the Feast that Jesus kept. He was directed to the Edo Hotel. The television crew returned on Thursday to film our trip to visit the zoo and again on the last Holy Day to film the blessing of the children service and part of the final sermon. We actually had several visitors as a result of the television coverage.

A number of local men shared in the speaking responsibilities, giving sermons and split sermons. They all did an outstanding job. Azariah Maxwell Coffie, formerly of the Remnant Church of God, came over from

as good as you will hear at any Feast site!

The hand of God was evident in all the activities. With astonishing regularity, each day's special music tied in with the messages given. Some of the messages included: learning to rejoice; how to have conviction and a high sense of purpose in our lives; walking, talking, living and acting holy; the three levels of our relationship with God's law; how to wage peace; a youth Bible study on dating and marriage; a Bible study on "whole Bible" Bible study; and much more.

Families and children alike enjoyed the sports and social day. It was a relaxing and fun-filled day with such activities as a sack race, catching the train, indoor and outdoor games, "pull for peace," poem recitations, dramas, skits, choreography, cultural dance and other talents performed by young and old alike.

Several who attended live too far away to attend the weekly Sabbath services. We all knew it would be a long time before we would all be together again. It was hard to say good-bye.

The words of one of the members sum it up well: "While we may tend to feel every Feast here in Nigeria is the best Feast ever, this Feast really was one of the best in a very long time.

"This Feast's joyous atmosphere and reality of being part of a great worldwide family or international association of God's people was reinforced more in members' minds by the wonderful example and freely given financial sacrifice by our brethren in sister churches in the United States. Their financial gifts of love took care of the accommodations plus lunch and dinner for all the brethren! Without this assistance, the Feast would not have been as enjoyable and fun-filled nor kept in as nice a place as we had this year.

"We sincerely appreciate their love and pray for God's blessings and grace to abound more in their lives. It also is a big encouragement to us as we realize they are setting good examples of godly love in deeds for us to emulate."

Oludare Akimbo and Bruce Gore

Peru

Huanchaco

This year we celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in Huanchaco, a city on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. There we enjoyed eight days of rejoicing and Christian fellowship. Our highest attendance was 161. We enjoyed the company of 18 brethren from Ecuador and 9 from the United States. We really appreciate the effort they made to come and share with us.

We had messages about the wonderful world to come and how to prepare ourselves now for that world. We also had messages relating how to live our daily lives while we wait for Jesus Christ.

One of the highlights of the Feast was a presentation made by the children of the congregation. They prepared this show for almost nine months and were very happy to give something to the brethren through this special event.

We had a get-together, prepared by the married couples, for the singles attending the Feast. We also had a dinner prepared by the singles for the married couples. We enjoyed a lively talent show with Peruvian dances, and two groups of members, one from Huaraz and one from Lima, played Peruvian music for us.

By the end of the Feast we were very sad to say good-bye, but left with the strong desire to persevere in God's way and keep praying "Your Kingdom come."

Manuel Quijano

Philippines

Baguio City

For the second year we held the Feast in Baguio City at the Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) "Ang Atang Tahanan" (Our Home) National Program and Training Center compound. With enthusiasm and joy 106 brethren from the Luzon area of the Philippines, together with two overseas brethren from the



Playing and singing in Baguio City, Philippines (photos by Rafael Uy and Rey Evasco)



Baguio City, Philippines, group (photo by Rafael Uy)

United States and Australia, kept the Feast in this site that is very conducive for worship and fellowship.

The main activities for the Feast, of course, were the services. Whole-day services were held on the first day as well as the Last Great Day when the Feastgoers enjoyed a fellowship lunch together at the campgrounds of the GSP. Morning services were held on the second to the seventh day of the Feast.

We were all inspired by the messages delivered, which focused on the wonderful world tomorrow and how we ought all to prepare ourselves for our tremendous responsibilities as kings and priests under Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God. We were all likewise moved by the very timely message of the Festival video on equipping the saints in the service of God.

Especially inspired and moved by the messages was a group of prospective members from San Fabian, Pangasinan, who kept the Feast of Tabernacles for the first time. They were all grateful that God had opened their minds to understand His wonderful plan of salvation, not only for Christians, but for all of mankind.

Feastgoers had fun in the city tour of Baguio riding on colorful passenger jeepneys. They also enjoyed a Walt Disney film on a modern-day "Noah." Other family-oriented activities included a family dance night and variety show, as well as a family day where families enjoyed an afternoon of fun and games. Teens were also treated to a game of bowling in the afternoon of the youth day and the seniors were honored with a dinner especially for them.

The Feast ended with all the brethren renewed



Preparing to practice for the children's choir at the Davao City Feast site; above, King Finlay of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, surrounded by kids in Davao (photos by Charles Macaraeg)

the camp. In 1998, we were only 112. In four years, we have more than doubled—having grown 162 percent!

Our highest attendance this year was 293, a 28 percent increase over last year. We have grown by almost 30 percent per year since our first UCG Feast here in 1997. Since last Feast alone, God has added four new congregations—bringing the total number of Mindanao congregations to 15.

We had 17 baptisms this Feast, from nine of the congregations in Mindanao. The combined Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day offering posted a 50.6 percent increase over last year.

God also blessed us with inspiring messages on fearing God and keeping our focus on the goal. We were blessed to have two visiting speakers—Clyde Kilough, chairman of the Council of Elders, and his father-in-law, King Finlay, an elder serving in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Both of them and their wives were with us for the first half of the Feast (this is the second time in a row that the Kiloughs attended the Feast with us). We also had other guests from the United States.

Mr. Kilough showed a 20-minute video clip on the opening night service, documenting the grandeur of our universe. It was awe-inspiring to compre-

and strengthened to face the world again but looking forward to keeping the Feast again next year and more focused on what the Feast gloriously pictures: the Kingdom of God!

Rey Evasco

Davao City

Imagine happy people living next door to each other—eating, laughing, singing, playing and worshipping God together. That was what it was like at the Davao Festival site. Almost everyone lived within the peaceful atmosphere of the GSP camp, away from the noise and commotion of the city.

This is the fifth year that we used

hend what great things God has in store for us!

All the messages were a great blessing, as were the activities for young and old alike: seniors' social, youth activity, family night, the beach outing and fruit festival. There was also a variety show, featuring authentic Filipino cultural songs and dances.

Without togetherness, an emotional bond couldn't be built. It doesn't matter where we come from; nor how rich or poor; nor the color of our eyes or skin. In God's loom, our many lives become one beautiful tapestry.

Being together made it special—helping make it the best Feast ever!

Daniel Roy G. Macaraeg

Iloilo City

This year's Feast of Tabernacles in Punta Villa Iloilo proved to be the best and most fruitful for the Visayas area brethren (the central part of the Philippines). Eighty-three of God's people gathered from Negros Occidental and Leyte provinces as well as from Aus-

tralia and the United States.

moving bamboo poles with the local fast rhythm music as background. Clyde Kilough and Florante Siopan baptized Mrs. Ruperta Beto of Sempoma Sabah, East Malaysia. The baptism was witnessed by a number of brethren in the afternoon of the seventh day of the Feast.

We were very much welcomed by the resort's management. They offered free use of their three pools to UCG members and their families during the whole Feast.



Iloilo City, Philippines (photos by Raul Villacote and Samuel Siopan)

tralia and the United States.

For eight days, the people of God enjoyed physical and spiritual food and close camaraderie, which made relationships ever closer and stronger. Everyone got to know each other, giving a true picture of one family.

God blessed us through the messages delivered, which focused mostly on the coming world tomorrow and on how Christians should live while waiting for the return of Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom of God. The message of this year's Festival video, which talked about equipping the saints in the service of God and His people, was well received by the brethren, especially for those who serve in the ministry.

A number of brethren from outside the Philippines who attended here for the first time showed their love and concern for the brethren. One visitor bought Bibles from local malls for the brethren. Another brother from the United States, who wasn't able to come, donated funds to buy Bibles as well. Others expressed their love by contributing to the needs of young people, particularly the children during group activities. The variety show during the Family Night was a big success. Our foreign guests joined and enjoyed dancing the *tinikling*, called by one guest, the "dangerous dance." *Tinikling* is a Filipino dance where the participants have to carefully tiptoe between

the hard part of the Feast is the end. There was a lot of hugging and kissing, and most eyes were wet, not wanting to see that it was time to depart. One child expressed her true feelings when she said, "Why not extend the Feast? I don't want to go home yet."

Florante Siopan

South Africa

Uvongo

The Feast of Tabernacles 2002 was celebrated in Uvongo, South Africa, beside the warm Indian Ocean waters of the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal. We had our highest attendance of 252



Uvongo, South Africa, audience and Feast choir (photos by Michelle and Clarissa de Campos)

people on the first and second days of the Feast. This included a welcome contingent of 14 U.S. visitors, one each from France and New Zealand, and four from the United Kingdom.

Roy and Norma Holladay spent the Feast with us. Members remarked about his inspirational sermons, speaking on the eternal benefits of the Kingdom of God, the healing of the world, why the Kingdom of God will endure, what we will be doing forever and the timing of events on the Last Great Day.

Bill Jahns spoke for the first time at a South African site, speaking to the youth about choices in life and explaining the meaning of the eighth day of the Feast as a day of fairness, when God gives everyone an opportunity to be converted.

The Festival video was highly appreciated, and provided a great insight into how the saints will be trained for future service in the Kingdom.

The ordination of Jorge de Campos on the first Holy Day was an exciting event, and many members found the two Bible studies introducing Ambassador Bible Center subjects very valuable. Mr. Holladay covered an introduction to the Epistles of Paul, and Bill Jahns delved into the myths of evolution and facts of divine creation.

There were outstanding offerings of 100 percent above last year's. Although the weather was unusually intrusive into our activities, most Feastgoers found many things to do together, including boating close to whales and dolphins, visiting the Oribi Gorge and enjoying the beach when the sun shone.

In the absence of André van Belkum, who was in Zimbabwe and Malawi for the Feast, Neil Becker coordinated the Uvongo site.

Our visitors commented on the friendships they made at the Feast. Alyson Alexander, from Texas, said, "I had the most wonderful time in Uvongo! From the opening night I was made to feel right at home. The brethren were extremely welcoming and friendly. Fast friends were made right away."

"The Feast in Uvongo was highlighted by the warmth, love and camaraderie of the brethren in South Africa," said Mr. Holladay. "The hospitality of the brethren was outstanding. I think one theme of the Feast was maintaining the vision of the Kingdom of God. The brethren in South Africa are faced with many dangers on a daily basis. We were encouraged by their willingness to obey God and to carry on with their lives. God has a group of members in South Africa who are primed for growth in the future."

More comments and

photographs can be found on the Web at www.ucgrsa.org/feast/.

Peter Hawkins

United States

Bend-Redmond, Oregon

Feastgoers here enjoyed beautiful fall scenery and summer-like weather in the pines and mountains of Central Oregon. The High Desert Museum, a 38-mile dinner train ride and a family chuck wagon dinner show were among the most popular attractions. Our second annual family fun show was again an outstanding success, attended by more than 500 brethren; and 62 teens enjoyed an afternoon of recreation at Eagle Crest resort. More than 200 seniors were treated to a sumptuous buffet lunch.

Attendance at services averaged between 800 and 900 every day, peaking at 931 on the first Holy Day (plus a record 58 cybercast connections). Also 270 attended a Bible study on millennial justice conducted by Bob Dick.

An article about the Feast appeared in the Bend newspaper the day before opening night. Another 700-word article written by Feast coordinator Larry Walker entitled, "Celebrate the Future Reign of Jesus on Earth" appeared in the "Words on Faith" section of the Bend newspaper on the opening day of the Feast.

Holy Day offerings were generous. Cash donations of more than \$1,000 and 50 boxes of food items were collected for and donated to the local food bank. Leftover food at the end of the Feast was distributed to needy members.

Larry J. Walker

Branson, Missouri

More than a thousand brethren celebrated the Feast in the heart of the Ozarks in Branson, Missouri. The sermons were outstanding, the weather was beautiful, the activities well-planned—all ideal for fellowship.

Speakers at the Feast delivered inspiring messages—whether sermons, Bible studies, offertories or sermons. Topics included vision, restoration, reputation and discerning the times, to name a few. Would you believe we sleuthed our way through the mystery of dry bones in true detective style?

Teens were able to get together at Table Rock State Park and enjoyed a variety of activities. Our seniors fellowshipped during a luncheon in their honor. Families were able to spend quality time at a local putt-putt golf course and go-cart track.

The golfers in our midst had their choice of many courses to play on, including a Jack Nicklaus signature course. If the scores weren't perfect, the weather certainly was.

I bet you are wondering about the shows! Branson has over 60 shows in more than 30 theaters, and our brethren were able to take in a number of them. The people who run Baldknobbers Theater, where we met for

services in Branson, were the folks who started the first show in Branson in the late 1950s. They are still providing family-oriented entertainment.

Of course the biggest factor in Branson's success was God's Spirit. If you have the chance to visit Branson for the Feast, you will have a wonderful time.

Paul Wasilkoff

Corpus Christi, Texas

What a wonderful year to observe God's Festival in Corpus Christi, Texas! The 576 attendees (approximately 100 more than anticipated) enjoyed the beauty of Corpus Christi Bay on the Gulf of Mexico.

The Feast began with Hurricane Isidore heading our way. As a Festival congregation, we prayed and asked God to protect our site as well as our sister site in Panama City Beach, Florida. Those prayers were answered. Corpus Christi only had rain one morning during services. The skies cleared by noon and our teen pool and beach party came off without a hitch. In fact, the weather this year was the best I have seen during the Feast, with temperatures in the mid-80s and bright sunshine.

The messages were inspiring. Each speaker expounded a specific aspect of God's plan of salvation as revealed through the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day.

A spirit of harmony and cooperation was evident. This year "Bayfest" (a city-sponsored carnival with food vendors, live musical presentations and retail kiosks) was held on the last weekend of the Feast. We had been concerned about how it might impact our services and parking, but all worked well for all concerned.

On behalf of the festival congregation at Corpus Christi, we offer our sincere thanks to the brethren worldwide who prayed for our weather and safety. God richly blessed our observance of His Feast.

Britton M. Taylor

Escondido, California

This year 1,130 brethren assembled together in the lovely Performing Arts Center of Escondido to hear loud, clear and lovingly expressed the wonderful news about the coming Kingdom of God. This year more than ever God's incredible loving desire for an intimate and enduring relationship with each of us seemed to be the unmistakable underlying theme of each message.

The Escondido Feast site once again enjoyed its predictable warm but pleasant late summer temperatures. This city lies in an interior valley of Northern San Diego County. Within 30 to 40 minutes' drive in each direction, you can either be heading into pine-clad mountains, enjoying a sandy beach, touring the major attractions of San Diego or walking through the vineyards of nearby Temecula. Each year nearly 40 to 50 percent of our people stay in the beach communities of Oceanside or Carlsbad and commute into services.

While metropolitan San Diego has world-class attractions, the primary attraction at the Escondido Feast site rightfully remains the Festival activities themselves and the brethren. Through-

out the course of the week, we were able to experience young adult and teen drop-in socials, a teen beach party, a Hawaiian luau, a senior citizens' banquet and a fine dinner and musical production put on by the Performing Arts Center.

Perhaps the most popular event continues to be the old-fashioned family day picnic at a nearby park that brings all the brethren together no matter how old or how young.

The Escondido site had a rich array of additional Church-related educational experiences including Festival youth classes, a teen Bible class, a young adults' Bible study and an evening Bible study. This year's study, conducted by Cecil Maranville, centered on a prophetic subject of much interest, "What Is the Mark of the Beast?"

Next year Escondido will once again be an official site for the Feast of Tabernacles 2003. While many experienced the "best Feast yet" this year, we look forward to what God has in store for us to learn and experience next year in this pleasant valley city.

Robin Webber

Gatlinburg, Tennessee

This year 1,525 attended a spectacular Feast and Last Great Day in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Although we had a little more rain than the year before, that too was really a blessing in that it was much needed in the area and it had very little effect on activities.

The spiritual food pointed us towards that time in the future we all yearn so desperately for. I heard many positive comments about this year's Feast video, and we had an all-time-high number of requests for sets of sermon tapes as well. The messages were straight from the heart and well received, as was the special music. The special music ranged from beautiful selections sung by the choir to a spectacular violin solo. Of course the children's choir was a highlight as usual—the smiles and the voices completely lit up the room.

All of the planned activities were well attended. We had a family dance on the first Saturday night bringing old friends and family together as well as introducing new family and friends to one another. The following evening many of the elementary school-aged children spent the night at the Aquarium of the Smokies learning about sea life and actually sleeping underneath the glass enclosed tanks filled with sharks, sting rays and hundreds of species of sea creatures.

On Monday evening hundreds of Feastgoers attended the Dixie Stamped, a dining experience in which everyone eats a huge meal with their fingers while watching a dazzling display of horsemanship in the center arena. Audience participation is heavily encouraged, and we found the Church to be in fine voice as everyone cheered loudly.

Tuesday was Family Day and hundreds more tracked up into the mountains to Ober Gatlinburg via driving the winding roads or taking the gondola. Once there, they were met with activities ranging from board games to go-carts, from an alpine slide to ice skating.

It was uplifting to see the smiles on everyone's faces.

Other activities included a host of singles' activities, an evening concert put on by the Myers Brothers (Dave Myers was not present), a night of "Pickin' and Grinnin'," a seniors' luncheon and two teen activities including karaoke, games and pizza. On Friday evening there were well received Bible studies for four different groups.

For me personally the highlight of the Feast was the obvious miracle God provided in caring for an 84-year-old member from the Wichita, Kansas, congregation. Mrs. Virginia Wempfen fell during the Feast and was taken to the trauma center in Knoxville. Upon arrival she was found to have several broken ribs, a punctured lung and was in considerable pain. The doctors were very concerned that she might not make it. There was tremendous concern about her developing pneumonia as well.

However, as the days progressed, it became evident that God was listening to all the prayers. She was able to begin traveling home the Sunday following the Feast. Although a complete recovery may take some more time, it was tremendously encouraging to see God's direct intervention before our very eyes. God truly is a loving Father. By all accounts this was another wonderfully inspiring and uplifting Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day.

Mark Winner

Hagerstown, Maryland

Todd Carey, in the opening night message for the 2002 Feast of Tabernacles in Hagerstown, Maryland, set a



Friendly faces in Hagerstown, Maryland; right, Belinda Epps performing special music (photos by Erik Jones)

theme of filling others' "buckets" with respect, festivity and rejoicing while not allowing Satan to destroy our Feast with bad attitudes. "Brethren, determine in your heart tonight, that there's nothing that Satan is going to do to railroad your Feast. I mean nothing. Don't allow the evil one to have a moment of your Festival, brethren." Taking the message to heart, brethren began "filling each others' buckets" immediately and continued doing so throughout the Feast.

The Feast of 2002 marked the first year that the United Church of God has sponsored a Feast in Hagerstown. While there are always a few challenges in setting up a new location, Hagerstown proved to be an overwhelming success and served as a wonderful site to obey God's command to observe His Feast of Tabernacles.

With a high attendance of 944 on the first day, the Feast was marked by inspiring sermons on topics such as the glory of God, preparing to rule in the Kingdom, the bride of Christ, an overview of God's end-time plan, choices and consequences, living waters, the meaning of the Last Great Day and patience. These were backed up by an adult Bible study on the "Feast of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day – Past, Present and Future," a young adult Bible study on "Discerning the Times" and a teen Bible study on "Being a Judge in the World Tomorrow." Of course, the Feast video was inspiring and instructive.

The brethren in Hagerstown were also able to enjoy a wonderful physical feast with many family-oriented activities. Bus trips and tours to Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Maryland, were enjoyed by many brethren. Teens had the unique opportunity to design and plan their own activity! They chose a night at a nearby bowling alley/video arcade. Our senior citizens relaxed at a delicious luncheon followed by entertainment provided by fellow seniors.

Family day was tremendous fun as the brethren gathered at the historic Hagerstown City Park to enjoy food, fellowship and children's games. That night everyone gathered again in the auditorium for a Family Fun Show that showcased the talent and humor of many of our brethren. Another popular activity was a bus trip to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to enjoy a musical presentation at the Sight and Sound Millennium Theater. The show told the story of Daniel's life and his faith.

Of course, we tend to mention the official activities, but we all know that some of the most enjoyable and memorable Feast activities are the hours spent around the dinner table or swimming pool talking with brethren of like mind. These precious hours of learning about each other and encouraging each other are always a Feast highlight!

There was a spirit of peace, love and cooperation at the Feast in Hagerstown as over 900 of God's people gathered to celebrate and learn about the wonderful

world tomorrow. King David would be pleased as the brethren fulfilled his words: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

Erik Jones

Jekyll Island, Georgia

The Feast in Jekyll Island, Georgia, this year was characterized by peace and unity among the 1,063 brethren in attendance. This was over 200 more attendees than projected. Jekyll Island is an ideal site with its minimal commercialization and pristine beauty. The weather, overall, was excellent, with rain for only



Enjoying a beautiful sunset at the beach in Jekyll Island, Georgia (photos by Sharon Babcock)

a couple of days in spite of the adjacent storms. The Teen/Family Beach Outing was a huge success again this year with about 300 participating. It rained for a day and a half before the beach outing, right up to the time we needed it to quit. God answered our prayers and we had perfect weather for it.

Bible studies were well attended. The Feast video was well received. Special music was special. The children's choir gave a delightful performance. The Festival Youth Instruction elicited good comments from parents and children.

The Family Dance was enjoyed by 363 enthusiastic participants. Our Seniors' Luncheon was successful for several reasons: good food and fellowship, a lovely medley of songs sung for us by a Church member and an inspiring address by one of the senior ministers.

Once again this year our community service project was hugely successful. We gave a combined total of about \$6,000 in goods (mostly) and cash to two charitable organizations in Brunswick, Georgia, that deal with orphaned children and battered women. Both establishments were thrilled with our contributions.

Best of all, we were spiritually nourished by balanced and inspiring messages from all of the speakers.

Bob Jones

Keystone, Colorado

There was gold in the mountains around Keystone, Colorado, for the Feast this year. The aspens did not quite reach their peak by the end of the Feast, but many were strikingly gold. Most often we are past the color peak by the time the Feast arrives. The weather was generally quite nice, and we had a small

amount of snow about the middle of the Feast. It didn't accumulate in Keystone, but the higher surrounding mountains were beautifully blanketed. This seemed to be especially appreciated by our Texas visitors.

The high attendance count was 643 on the first Holy Day. The conference center space we used was an optimum size for our group, so finding seats was not a major difficulty. There were several well-attended Church-sponsored activities such as the Family Dance and Family Day swimming and basketball. The seniors' activity was highly successful, and the "Oldy-weds Game" was enjoyed by all the seniors.

Sermons were very helpful and seemed to center on the attitudes and character we need to be developing to serve with the Messiah in the world tomorrow, along with the traditional portrayal of the vision of the Kingdom of God and its contrast with today's world.

Larry Neff

Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii

This year 374 Feastgoers enjoyed the tropical beauty of the island of Kauai in the Hawaiian

Islands. While the trade winds were not blowing during the Feast, the excitement of the brethren more than made up for the physical doldrums, thousands of times over!

Scores of members commented positively about the quality and content of the messages. Mr. and Mrs. Les McCullough and Mr. and Mrs. Mario Seiglie and family were a welcome part of the Feast in Hawaii, along with the many other elders and families who contributed their time to serve.

The recent focus on servant leadership certainly influenced many members at the Feast on Kauai. Four husband-and-wife couples from Minneapolis were very instrumental in the set-up and tear-down of the Festival operations this year. One algebra teacher volunteered to tutor students before services, so they wouldn't fall behind in their classes. (This was the first time in 26 years of coordinating that this coordinator had ever been approached with this type of volunteer offer!)

Others voluntarily donated funds to pay for the seniors' luncheon, making it possible for the seniors to be treated to a gratis luncheon. Over three times the amount of foodstuffs and other items were donated at the end of the Feast for the Center for Abused Women on Kauai. The Holy Day offerings were superb!

The Kenneth Shoemaker family from the Portsmouth, Ohio, area did a superb job with the special music. The teen instrumental ensemble, the Bosserman family and all special musicians did a very fine job serving the brethren with their musical talent.

The teens enjoyed a four-hour snorkel trip along the coast of Kauai on a sailing catamaran, a dance and a special Bible study. A Bible study seminar was conducted for the young adults. Members took advantage of dozens of exciting and enjoyable activities on the

island—activities ranging from just lying on the beach to snorkeling and diving, from fishing to hiking in exotic places, from quad riding to helicopter tours of the island.

Earl L. Roemer

Panama City Beach, Florida

The Edgewater Beach Resort Conference Center at Panama City Beach, Florida, provided a beautiful tropical setting for the Feast of Tabernacles 2002. Our highest attendance was 1,834 brethren from 30 states with some from the Caribbean.

All of the sermons and sermonettes

two days of strong winds with some rain, but otherwise the weather was beautiful.

The seniors' luncheon was very successful with many comments on the quality and abundance of the food. We had to cancel the teen beach outing because of rain, but moved the activity to a nearby bowling alley that many said they enjoyed more since they had the beach available to them on other days anyway.



The singles enjoyed the Hawaiian luau and dance scheduled for them, and the teens were pleased with their dance that had the same theme.



Scenes from Panama City Beach, Florida (photos by Don Daugherty and Ken Treybig)



The convention center staff continues to compliment the brethren on their patience when it is needed and comment on the enjoyment they receive from serving us.

Harold Rhodes

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

It was an outstanding Feast at this beautiful upper Midwest site, with a record attendance of 1,363 on the first Holy Day. Clearly many were pleased with the inspiring messages and the spirit of love and service among God's people. Many brethren raved about the special music. The "Hallelujah Chorus" was performed on the opening night by the 72-member choir and 45-member Festival Orchestra. During the performance of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," the brethren were asked to stand and join the choir in singing this stirring piece of music. A children's choir, a teen choir and brass ensemble also performed during the Feast.

A 13-member band, directed by Herb Teitgen, provided lively music for



Feastgoers in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin (photo by Joe Jacoby)

the most inspiring. Brethren commented positively on the meaty content of the spiritual meals served. There was a noticeable attitude of service displayed, with more volunteers for the Festival responsibilities than we actually needed. This is always refreshing!

Some of the local attractions provided us with discount coupons. Gulf World Marine Park continues to be a favorite of the brethren and their children. During the performance the children are allowed to touch the dolphins.

Our biggest concern this year was the threat of tropical storm Isidore entering the Gulf and turning into a hurricane. The brethren were asked on more than one occasion to pray that this would not happen. The great God we serve heard our prayers, as well as the prayers of many of our brothers and sisters around the world.

Isidore never gained strength as it traveled north the entire length of the Gulf of Mexico before striking the U.S. mainland. Wind speeds never increased over 65 miles per hour. The water temperatures in the Gulf were very favorable for this storm to have increased in intensity, but it never happened!

One of the local weather station's meteorologists said, "This storm is not doing what it is supposed to be doing!" However, the rest of us thought it was doing exactly what it was supposed to be doing, since we had all been asking God to intervene for us, as well as our brothers and sisters in Jamaica and Jekyll Island, Georgia. We had one or

the popular family dance. Brethren were encouraged to bring non-perishable canned goods to the dance as a community service project. Over one ton of food and other items were donated to a local food pantry.

On Thursday during the Feast 265 senior citizens enjoyed music, a heartfelt message by Ellis LaRavia, a lunch and fellowship at the seniors' activity. Beautiful handmade wooden items, including a mantel clock, candelabra, desk caddy, book holder and jewelry box with brass engravings, were given out during the activity. Illinois member Marty Johnson and his family made these unique works of art.

Both the family day activities and numerous singles activities were appreciated by those attending. Festival Youth Instruction classes were enjoyed by over 100 youth during the Feast. A special teen Bible study was attended by 76 teens, and 38 people attended the young adults' seminar. A local newspaper carried a positive article about the United Church of God observing the Feast.

On youth day, youngsters were invited to the stage to receive their own millennial stuffed animal as a Feast gift by the brethren. Some seniors at the seniors' activity were also given these fuzzy friends.

Many thanks to all the brethren who served so faithfully at the Dells Feast site. Their service is greatly appreciated by all of us. We are very grateful to God for His truths as found in the annual Holy Days and for inviting us to observe them each year.

Steve Nutzman

Zambia

Mumbwa

We had a really wonderful and inspirational Feast in the Mumbwa region of Zambia.

Our members, as usual, stayed in booths made from grass, and food was prepared and eaten communally. There was a wide selection from the local maize meal (called *nshima*), rice and potatoes. Meats included chicken, goat and venison.

All families except one attended the Feast, and the highest attendance was 101 with an average of 95. Activities included Family Day, a dance, video shows and an impromptu Spokesman's Club meeting.

The variety show was canceled on Wednesday when we received the sad news that one of our long-standing members, Gibson Simalyata, who was unable to attend because of illness, died on the Tuesday during the Feast at a hospital near his home.

We heard a number of very inspiring sermons from local men and from videos sent from the home office. The special music was particularly outstanding. The offering was

much lower than last year, at K 109,200 on the first day and K 111,200 on the last day. Last year's figures were distorted because of visitors from South Africa. Another factor is the drought which has seriously affected member income and, therefore, their ability to give.

There was an additional source of

celebration in that we completed the procurement and delivery of 5,950 kilograms (6.5 tons) of maize donated by the churches in the United States and South Africa. Overall, it was a joyous and spiritually uplifting Feast for all the Zambian brethren.

Kambani Banda

Zimbabwe

Harare

Thirteen people traveled from all corners of Zimbabwe in order to attend the Feast in the capital, Harare. Numbers were down as many members who attended in Harare last year went to their own site on Lake Malawi (see separate report). However, the small numbers resulted in a feeling of closeness and solidarity. Along with the joy and excitement generated by what the Feast pictures, there was also a sense of sobri-

ety as a result of the political upheaval in the country. The present uncertainties make the plan of God for world peace and security for all peoples much more desirable and attractive.

Members watched video presentations sent from home office and heard sermons from the visiting minister from South Africa, André van Belkum, accompanied by his wife, Elize.

Through the generous donations of individuals and churches in other countries, the members were able to enjoy a sumptuous buffet meal at an upscale hotel. These funds were also used to assist with transport and accommodation costs for some that traveled long distances. Our members appreciate the concern and thoughtfulness on their behalf.

Even though the group in Zimbabwe was small in numbers, they made up for this factor through their spirit of togetherness and brotherly kindness.

André van Belkum

Feast Cybercasts Serve Shut-ins

For the sixth year, the United Church of God has provided access to Feast services through the Internet. This year services were cybercast from four locations, two in the United States (Hagerstown, Maryland, and Bend, Oregon) and two in Canada (Regina, Alberta, and Kelowna, British Columbia). This year Churches of God Cyber Auxiliary provided two Real servers, thus increasing the capacity for more concurrent listeners. One server was used by the Canadian sites and one by the U.S. sites. Daily average connections were: Hagerstown—56; Bend—43; Kelowna—12; Regina—20.

Note that these are averages and are only the number of connections. Some connections would have one person listening, others a family or group. On the weekend services both Bend and Hagerstown maxed out the server they were on at 60 streams each. In the Pacific time zone, those who could not connect to Bend were able to join the Kelowna services. At one time there were 79 concurrent connections.

We certainly appreciate the many volunteers (and their families) who work to make the cybercasts possible, both in providing their time at the Feast, and also in bringing their computer equipment to use. At the sites that provided both video and audio, it takes twice the amount of equipment and manpower. Archives of sermons from the sites are available from the Feast cybercast Web site, www.ucg-fot.org.

Feedback

Each year the cybercast teams and home office receive many positive letters of appreciation for the cybercasts. Here are two that express how the cybercasts audience feels:

"I just finished listening to the United Feast video via the Internet. What an encouragement! Words can't describe what I'm experiencing after hearing that message. What a message—the centrality of Christ, the message of grace and repentance and the selfless ministry to the sheep. My heart cannot

help but be drawn to that attitude of service and humility. My attitude and thoughts about United have been changed. It is so encouraging to see how God has brought United down the road it has and how the Church continues to grow. God is preparing His people for His Son's second coming. What a time that will be. Keep the faith!" (family of five, North Carolina). Another listener in Missouri wrote: "The Feast was especially wonderful this year! Each sermon was more meaningful and helpful than the last. The Feast video was so moving, so poignant that I cried. What fun it was to listen to the song leaders and ministers as they teased each other from the podium . . . And as always, there was that indescribable feeling of joy at the sound of all the voices joining together singing hymns of praise to God.

"Where did I go for the Feast? Actually, for reasons of health I wasn't able to go anywhere, but I was able to attend the Feast via the live cybercasts . . . The chat room at Bend, Oregon, provided invigorating fellowship.

"Just how 'real' are the live cybercasts? They are so real that every day I dressed in Sabbath clothes because God's presence could be felt . . .

"In no way am I suggesting that even a live cybercast can replace actually being at services. No cyberhug can ever replace a real hug from a friend or someone touching your hand in a reassuring gesture or a heartwarming smile. But when health restricts your activities or when babies are due or for whatever reason you have to stay home, live cybercasts are truly a great blessing . . . I am extremely grateful for the faithfulness, thoughtfulness and sacrifice of the cybercrews, and pray for God to bless them mightily for their kindness! It was through their efforts that, in spite of my physical limitations, I could still have 'the best Feast ever!'"

With positive responses like these, we plan to continue providing this service in the years to come!

Dan Deininger



From the Word

Christian Race Relations

■ God says the Church is neither Jew nor Greek, and by extension it is not black, yellow or white either. We have access to His Spirit to bridge the gaps to become true brothers.

by Ralph Levy

A few nights before writing this article, I attended an interesting lecture here in the Cincinnati area, given by Svetlana Broz, the granddaughter of the late dictator of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito. The title of the lecture was "Clash of Cultures or Struggle Between Good and Evil." The subject was the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia after the death of Marshal Tito and the ensuing ethnic violence.

Dr. Broz' thesis was that there was peace and harmony between the various ethnic groups in Yugoslavia under the administration of her late grandfather. Serbs, Croats and Bosnians; Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox; as well as other nationalities, ethnic groups and religions all lived together in one national entity, in harmony and mutual respect, before evil nationalist forces were unleashed and some 250,000 people died in ethnic conflict.

The lecture, I suspect, may have presented an unrealistic depiction of the harmony that supposedly existed under Tito. Even where physical nations live in harmony, there is often tension and latent resentment under the surface. Nevertheless, the lecture was interesting for its utopian depiction of ethnic harmony among a mosaic of different groups that once coexisted in one political unit.

History of Hostility

The history of ethnic relations throughout most of human history, and especially in the 20th century, suggests that conflict, not harmony, is the "default state" in human affairs. The deaths of some six million Jews in the 1940s in central Europe attest to this. So does the cruel and barbarous conflict between China and Japan in the 1930s,

as well as the "ethnic cleansing" of the former Yugoslav republics in the 1990s.

Unconverted human beings seem unable to coexist when there are racial differences. In the United States, ongoing ethnic tensions linger in many areas, often between black and white Americans, but also at times involving Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans and others. Injustices, both historic and actual, continue to shape the psyche of many, and to foment continuing hostility and conflict.

Surprisingly, even among God's people we find that intercultural or interracial relations are not always harmonious. The New Testament shows clearly that the calling of the gentiles into the Church of God was a traumatic and often unwelcome event for many of the Jewish Christians.

The history is fascinating. It begins with the introduction into the Jewish nation of a relatively small number of people of other ethnic groups who became fully integrated into the nation as proselytes,



receiving circumcision and participating in all the Jewish laws and rituals. One such is included among the seven deacons selected and ordained in Acts 6, where we read of "Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch" (verse 5). This man was probably a Greek who adopted the Jewish religion and later went on to accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

Later, we read of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, who was not a proselyte to Judaism, but had come from a foreign country to worship at Jerusalem (Acts 8:27). Some feel this man was ethnically Jewish, while others hold that he was the first entirely

gentile convert. Either way, he was culturally different from the still almost entirely Jewish church; but being a loner, and returning to his native Ethiopia, his conversion didn't cause as much of a stir as did later non-Jewish converts.

What Peter Learned About Race Relations

In chapter 10 of the book of Acts, an entire non-Jewish family is converted. Cornelius, an Italian centurion and a God-fearer (verses 2, 22), that is one loosely associated with the Jewish religion, but not circumcised, was called of God and ready to be baptized. One might think this would have been cause for rejoicing, but not for everyone. The apostle Peter apparently had some wrong concepts to overcome, and they weren't overcome easily.

Peter's concept (and the prevailing concept in the Church of the time) was that only the Jewish people ought to be part of the Church. At one point, he withdrew from eating with non-Jews (Galatians 2:12). In order to teach Peter and all of us a lesson, God gave him the famous vision of unclean animals descending in a sheet from heaven, with the invitation to go ahead and eat (Acts 10:9-16). Three times the sheet descended and was taken up again into heaven (verse 16). Peter puzzled over the meaning of the vision, and must have been particularly perplexed at the thought of God asking him to consume unclean meats.

But meats weren't the point of the vision; God was revealing something much greater. Peter had hitherto held fast to the Jewish restrictions against table fellowship with gentiles (verse 28). But now he finally understood the lesson of the vision: "But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (same verse).

Once resistant, Peter now understood one of the great principles of the New Testament: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality [is no respecter of persons, KJV]. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (verses 34-35). It was to the astonishment of the converted Jews that God then sent the Holy Spirit on all those present, including Cornelius and his household (verses 44-45).

The ongoing controversy continued to echo throughout much of the New Testament, later leading to the conference of Acts 15, which was charged with the circumcision dilemma and



the question of acceptance of non-Jews into the Church without circumcision.

God is no respecter of persons. This is one of the major lessons of the Bible, given particular emphasis in the New Testament as the Church went from being composed of one people, one culture and one ethnic group, to being a multiethnic, multicultural body united by the Spirit of God.

What those early Christians had to learn was that membership in the Church of God isn't dependent in any way on ethnicity, nationality or skin color. A human being becomes part of the household of God by repenting of sin, being baptized and receiving the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit, which then makes him or her a child of God by reason of the Spirit, not of the flesh.



As the apostle Paul so succinctly put it: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26-28).

The Challenges Today

Let's now rapidly jump over some 19 centuries, and come to the Church of God as most of us have known it in the 20th and early 21st centuries. What we find is a body of people based heavily in the United States of America, a multiethnic nation. Gone is the tension between Jews and gentiles of the first century Church; present is the tension and hostility that forms the social backdrop in many of the cities and rural areas from which God has called us.

Tensions abound in our cities, at

times erupting in serious social upheaval, miscarriage of justice and even riots. This shouldn't surprise us; after all, Jesus Christ Himself prophesied of racial tensions. "Nation [ethnic, or racial group] will rise against nation," Jesus prophesied as one of the hallmarks of the last days (Matthew 24:7). And just as so many of the social trends around us are the most difficult pulls that we Christians have to combat in our own lives, so it may be with these prophesied racial tensions.

Yet we in the Church today have a very special opportunity: to model true, loving Christian relationships across racial lines, as mandated by the Bible. We must reverse the trend and show those who will take notice that the Spirit of God unites us as one people, bridging the gaps of different cultures, temperaments and racial features. The bond of God's Holy Spirit must unite us, and empower us all to provide a living lesson of true racial harmony, a harmony that honors Jesus Christ, who is the Head of us all.

Race Relations Committee and Web Site

To that end the United Church of God has established a Race Relations Committee and a Web site featuring writings by our own ministers on the subject, as well as other resources. We invite you to visit the site, at www.ucgrace.org.

Some have asked why the Church should need to have a Web site devoted to the subject of race relations. The answer is that the Church is to be an example to the world in every way. One of those ways is to demonstrate that Christians of all races and cultures can live together in the real harmony of the Spirit of God, and show what God's love can do among His people, of all different races.

We are to be the people of God in every way. Just as the early Church, part Jewish and part Greek, had to learn the big lesson of Christian love across cultural lines, so we in the Church today have a unique opportunity to demonstrate that we are God's people. We do this by building genuine loving and caring relationships in this multiracial, multinational and multicultural Church we are called to be part of. **UN**

On www.ucgrace.org you'll find:

- Links to UCG articles and sermons on race-related issues.
- "Thought-Provoking Reports" including interactive tests and PBS specials.
- "Frequently Asked Questions."
- "News & Views" with links to Barna Research, Gallup polls, etc.
- Information about the Race Relations Committee. Committee members are Todd Carey (chairman), Arnold Hampton, Fred Kellers and

David Myers. Reviewers are Ralph Levy, Dennis Luker (chairman of the Focused Education Committee, of which the Race Relations Committee is part) and Mario Seiglie.

The Mission Statement of the Race Relations Committee is: "To promote understanding and tolerance among people of diverse racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds by striving to reflect the mind of Jesus Christ."

A Simple Plan You Can Use for Effective Prayers

■ Better organization can help you answer the call for "prayer laborers."

by Robert Curry

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much," assures James 5:16.

As dedicated Christians, we are committed to praying daily. While we're at it, wouldn't it be nice if our prayers were effective in:

- Drawing us close to God.
- Transforming our hearts to be more in the work of the Church, thereby causing growth for us personally and for the work collectively.
- Producing answers because we know they're according to God's will.

The Lord's Plan

We can know this simple plan for effective prayer is God's will because it came from Jesus Christ. Many of us have "The Lord's Prayer" memorized from youth. We know it's a sample outline for prayer rather than a ritual to be muttered.

And what a powerful outline it is! Build a prayer along its lines and you will have your priorities straight instead of a litany of "gimmies." You will start with praise of God. Then talk to Him about the great worldwide work we are privileged to be a part of.

Continuing in unselfish outgoing concern, you ask for daily needs, forgiveness and deliverance from evil for "us." You close with your mind focused on God's Kingdom, power and glory. You

will know that it was an effective prayer well worth your time—and God's—and that He will answer it!

While we are "praying without ceasing," that is, in a prayerful attitude and perhaps praying frequently throughout the day (1 Thessalonians 5:17), we might not exactly follow the sample outline. A short prayer might be devoted to one particular topic. Likewise in an emergency, such as hanging from a cliff edge, praying "Help!" might be in order!

But let's not kid ourselves. Something is wrong if we aren't regularly making time to talk to our Creator—showing Him that He really is first in our lives. The easy system below is for those wonderful times when you have planned a half hour or more to really pray in detail. You won't be disappointed!

One Easy System

Use a card file and put each major portion of "The Lord's Prayer" on a separate card, ideally in a special color so they will stand out as dividers.

The first divider card would be "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name." Now on a regular card, jot down items you want to pray in that opening section. For example, "The supreme power of the universe," "Daddy," "Knows sparrows, hairs on head, names of stars," and "Master Timer."

Start with what is already in your heart to praise God. You can add other cards in the days ahead. Don't be surprised if you get an irresistible urge to do a detailed study of God's fascinating names so you can really hallow Him even a fraction of what He deserves.

To jumpstart this opening section of your prayer, read aloud a psalm, perhaps

one of David's. It will be well worth your time since David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), the way you want to be. I'm sure God doesn't mind hearing an old favorite again!

Remember Herbert Armstrong commenting that it would be ideal to spend up to 90 percent of prayers just praising God. Imagine that! You will be delighted to find that lasting 30 minutes will no longer be a worry. You will run out of time to pray before you run out of cards.

The second divider card would be "Your Kingdom come. Your will be done." Behind this will come cards about our work, which announces the Kingdom and is surely a major way God carries out His will.

Something wonderful takes place. Your heart begins beating more passionately for the work. You can't wait for the next *UnitedNews* because you know it's a gold mine of details to pray about. And you want to "beat your prayers up fine" so they will be sweet incense to God (Leviticus 16:12). Like any good employee, you want to know all about your organization's leaders and plans.

So instead of seeing a box listing the Council of Elders committees and hurrying on to something "more interesting," you quickly cut it out and paste it onto a card. Now you enjoy praying regularly for the individual committees, their members, chairmen and goals for the year. You determine that if you pray for just two committees each day, and they each have five to six members, you are praying for most of the Council of Elders daily.

When you get to the "daily bread" section, your divider could prominently display "Toby Keith." Even a huge coun-

try western fan might not get the connection at first. But this notation could remind you of his recent hit song and your need to pray for others first instead of wanting to "talk about me, me, me, me, me!" It makes for a good inside joke with the Master Humorist (hey, write that down in the first section!), and your prayers will be whole wheat rather than fiberless, empty, puffed-up leaven that the Holy Spirit has to enrich with "groanings" (Romans 8:26) to even resemble a prayer.

Holes in Your Girdle?

Read an article on a new congregation starting in the Philippines? Our work girdles the globe. Does our knowledge and interest stretch enough to contain it all? Or is that country—perhaps the whole area of Southeast Asia—one of the holes in your girdle?

Pull out a new card. Write down the names of the ministry including the wives. Include leading brethren and vital tasks they are responsible for. Note special needs. Jot down statistics. Months later, you'll be thrilled to read of growth—new donors, coworkers, members and accomplishments—since you began praying about it!

By the way, probably you will have looked up the country on your globe or atlas. More than geography, the real education is growing in *agape* love for an area you once didn't naturally identify with. You may start to think about attending a Feast there some year!

After a few times praying for Gladstone and Alice Chonde and their clinic in Malawi, you'll want to learn more about their lives, the clinic and how God is using them. When you read and pray

about special needs and service projects, don't be surprised if you find yourself thinking about how God can use you to do something.

Praying Laborers

"Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest," as Jesus exhorted (Luke 10:2). Sure enough, the Church of God has a critical need for more ministers. But the need for laborers in prayer is surely greater and each of us can do it!

We can stop feeling bad when an announcement thanks us for our prayers but we know, despite good intentions, we forgot. A card will remind us.

If sometimes we feel like just praying from the heart without using the cards, that's fine. We are talking to God. And He calls us friends! Each of us has a unique relationship with Him, and surely no two Christians will use the card system exactly the same. The cards are only a tool to assist us, not enslave us. We should update and remove some of the information from time to time.

That said, try this system—or perhaps the same type of system on your computer—and you will be delighted and excited to experience how powerful it can be in organizing, prioritizing and guiding your thoughts toward maximum effective, fervent prayer.

One of my most important cards reminds me to ask God for "more praying laborers for the ripe harvest." God will answer it! Can we count on you? **UN**

Robert Curry graduated from Ambassador College, Pasadena, in 1974. He and his wife, Mary, have four children (Katherine, Ian, Heather and Jessica) and attend in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Are You Like an Olive?

■ What spiritual lessons does God pack into this useful little fruit?

by Andy McClain

Olives may have been common in the land of Canaan, but they were also considered precious. The olive is mentioned 35 times in the Bible and its most important product, olive oil, is mentioned over 200 times.

The doors and doorposts within the temple's inner sanctuary along with the cherubim were made of olive wood (1 Kings 6:23, 31-33). Booths at the Feast of Tabernacles were made from olive and other tree branches (Nehemiah 8:15). Olive oil was used in the tabernacle lamps for light (Leviticus 24:2), and oil was also used to anoint the kings of Israel (Saul in 1 Samuel 10:1 and David in 1 Samuel 16:13).

In addition, oil was also used in most of the offerings. Even the two witnesses are referred to as olive trees (Revelation 11:3-4). David said, "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God" (Psalm 52:8).

God holds the olive tree, its fruit and

its oil as highly important. Our spiritual life can be related to this useful fruit. Let's take a look at the importance this tree holds for us.

Firmly Rooted

The olive tree is a stout evergreen fruit tree that has been cultivated for thousands of years. It is revered for its longevity and the tenacity with which it remains rooted in the ground, thriving despite adversity. It can withstand conditions of frost, drought and poor soil, typically living for 500 years, though there are claims of trees that are much older. This is because an olive tree has strong, hardy roots. The root system spreads out wide and long, making the trees hard to topple.

As Christians, we should be like the olive tree. Proverbs 12:3 reads, "The root of the righteous cannot be moved." We need to be well rooted in our lives by keeping God's truth in the forefront in our lives. Our use of God's Word should be wide-ranging as we apply it to many situations in our life. Reading, understanding and applying God's Word helps us become rooted in His way, making it difficult for Satan to topple us.



Fruitful

Olive trees do not produce fruit for six to 10 years after planting, and only when they are about 20 to 25 years old do they produce a full harvest. Olive trees produce a small, bitter oval fruit that is green when unripe and black when ripe. We often find this fruit as an hors d'oeuvre at parties or as a topping on pizza.

Proverbs 12:12 tells us that "the root of the righteous yields fruit." Once grounded in God's Word, we should produce fruit in service and love towards others—abundantly like the full harvest

of the olive tree. Learning to serve with love and care takes time and effort, much like the olive tree takes time to produce mature fruit.

For proper fruit development, the olive tree needs pruning. Pruning regulates production and helps shape the tree for easier harvesting. Radical pruning is often done to keep the olive tree at a desired height. Yet, the olive tree thrives after such trimming.

In like manner, God prunes us to produce fruit. Consider John 15.

Christ is the true vine and God the vinedresser. According to verse 2, "Every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit." God wants us to have His righteous character. He prunes us accordingly to help us develop as His begotten children.

Full of Oil

Olive oil is actually a fruit juice. The longer the olive ripens, the greater the oil content. Olives begin to grow in late June, but the best olive oil is made from ripe berries gathered in November or December.

From 10 to 35 percent of an olive is oil, but in order to extract the oil, the olive itself must be pressed. This is done either using a mill with wood or stones or by stomping with one's feet. Extra vir-



gin olive oil comes from the first pressing and is the purest oil with the best taste.

The Holy Spirit is often symbolized as olive oil in the Bible. As firstfruits, God has given us His Holy Spirit to help us know and understand His way (1 Corinthians 2:12-13). The Holy Spirit gives us strength to overcome our sins and the pressures put upon us by Satan. Our trials can be compared to the pressing or bruising done to the olive to produce the oil. God allows trials to help us stir up His Holy Spirit within us. And with use, God will increase our measure of His Holy Spirit much like the oil content increases in the olive as it ripens.

Olive trees were abundant in Israel and the oil was a staple in the people's diet. Today olives are still a main food item in the Mediterranean basin of Italy, Greece and Spain. However, in other parts of the world this fruit is considered more of a delicacy. God used this common daily item to help Israel understand their purpose in following Him. As spiritual Israel, we can still relate to the symbolism found in this simple fruit tree. We too should be able to say of ourselves that we are "like an olive tree in the house of God." **UN**

Why No Spectacular Miracles Today?

■ The Bible is full of descriptions of fantastic miracles. Many wonder, why don't we see great public miracles today?

by David J. Sandland

Over the years, working in Personal Correspondence for the Church of God, I have been confronted with many stimulating and thought-provoking questions that deserve an answer. One such question recently came into the United Church of God office here in Australia asking the question: "Why are no miracles being performed today?"

The writer went on to ask: "Why doesn't God speak and interact directly with us today, as He did with the likes of Elijah and Elisha, and others? Why can't we—God's people—make, for example, the head of an axe to float? Why is it that we don't have that power today?"

"Nothing spectacular is happening anymore. In the first century, supernatural things were going on all the time. Did the disciples have more of the Holy Spirit than we do or did they just have more faith? Because miracles were taking place on a daily basis.

"I think Jesus expects us to perform miracles; after all that was part of His message and ministry."

Certainly an interesting challenge. Why are there so few miracles, in the sense of *spectacular public displays* of God's power within His Church and by His people? Does God expect us to perform such miracles today, to somehow prove He is "on our side"?

True, many people do know that God does perform many miracles today. Many of us have witnessed miracles with practical benefits, such as the miracles of healing, protection, solving problems, etc. And then there's the miracle of conversion, which is the greatest miracle of all. However, that was not the type of miracle our writer was questioning. He spoke of the public displays of God's hand in the first and earlier centuries.

How would you have answered?

Perhaps a good place to start is in Hebrews 1:1: "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets." Those "various ways" did indeed include unmistakable and public miracles. Witness the life and work of the prophet Elijah and the judge Samson.

However, today He works in another way, as the explanation continues in verse 2. He "has in these last days spoken to us by His Son." Not necessarily through miracles, but through the life, message and teachings of Jesus Christ as recorded for us in the New Testament.

The miracles we read about in the Bible were examples of the power and love of God that are important to our understanding. But now that we have the biblical record, there is not the need to continually repeat all the different types of miracles.

Miracles were used at times to attract

large audiences, and this was especially important in the founding of the New Testament Church. Today, we have the benefit of mass media technology.

The Bible shows that God doesn't want to force everyone to see His truth and where He is working during this age, so that He doesn't have to hold them fully accountable and they can be extended more mercy (Matthew 13:10-17; Romans 11:7-10, 32). Proving Himself through miracles would make the audience more accountable.

And miracles aren't necessarily good for us. God gave many members of the Corinthian church miraculous spiritual gifts, but they seem to have done more harm than good in that the gifts went to the heads of the members.

Why Miracles?

Now let's consider a major question. What spiritual value are miracles anyway? What value are they in terms of conversion and salvation? Especially the public miracles that draw attention to God's work and people. Consider, as a first example, the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16.

When the rich man begged for a miracle (as our writer seems to be doing), a miracle of a resurrection from the dead, notice Abraham's reply in verse 31:

"If they do not hear Moses and the prophets [many of whom did perform miracles], neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."

Abraham explained that miracles would not necessarily convert the rich man's relatives.

What about the *miracles performed by Christ Himself*? Did they make any real difference? Would they have converted that rich man's family?

In Matthew 12:10-13 we read the miracle of Christ healing the man with a withered hand—a dramatic and undeniable miracle. What was the reaction of



True, many people do know that God does perform many miracles today, such as the miracle of healing and the miracle of conversion, which is the greatest miracle of all.

the unconverted and carnal Pharisees? Verse 14 says, "Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him." So much for any positive effect, even when a miracle was performed by Christ Himself!

Again, back in Matthew 9:1-3, we read of another of Christ's public miracles. This time a paralytic was miraculously healed. The reaction from the scribes? "This Man blasphemes!"

Another equally discouraging exam-

ple is recorded in Matthew 9:32-34. "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons," was the pathetic response. The same reaction is recorded in Matthew 12:22-24.

Apart from the mercy and kindness extended to those He healed, Christ would have saved Himself a great deal of opposition by not performing any miracles at all. But then Christ would have been asked, "Why do you not perform miracles like Elijah? Show yourself to be the Christ by performing a miracle." So would have gone the challenge and criticism.

Incidentally, even being a miracle worker, so-called, does not prove conversion or spirituality. Matthew 7:21-23 gives us the haunting and sobering warning that even those who have "cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name" will be confronted by Christ Himself with the chilling challenge, "I never knew you." Compare also Matthew 16:1-4.

So miracles don't necessarily have lasting or deep effects on those witnessing them. So, why none today? I guess you could say, Why bother?

Deceptive and Ineffective Miracles

We also need to consider that *miracles can be used to deceive*. Matthew 24:24 warns, "For false christ and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect." If we are looking for such signs and wonders as some kind of proof as to where God is working today, then we run the risk of being deceived.

Perhaps one of the *soberest warnings* and examples of just how ineffective a miracle can be in getting people to change, is seen by considering the people alive just before Christ's return, who witness endless miracles as described throughout the book of Revelation. What will be the ultimate reaction of such a godless generation to the divine intervention of God?

"But the rest of mankind . . . did not repent . . . And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts" (Revelation 9:20-21). Thus Christ has to return in undeniable power and might to convince that generation of unthankful, unholy and stubbornly resistant people. Miracles, of and by themselves, don't convince or convict people. Only the presence of Christ Himself will gain the permanent attention of that end-time generation. And many people will have to die and be resurrected before their minds are receptive to God's revelation.

Also in the book of Revelation, consider the miracles and wonders performed through the power of God by the two witnesses as recorded in Revelation 11:3, 5 and 6. These two individuals will be given power: fire will proceed out of their mouths; they will have power to shut up the heavens and power over the waters of the earth.

Will men repent in the face of such power? We know otherwise. Verses 7 through 10 show war will be made against them and they will be murdered. The earth will rejoice, not over their mir-



Even in the face of undeniable miracles, sin can and does deceitfully harden our hearts. The most important power for softening hard hearts is the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.

acles and power, but over their death! So much, again, for the power of miracles.

A Great Denial

Many of you will have been thinking about one of the greatest denials of miracle-working power ever experienced by mankind—the denial by ancient Israel of the God who miraculously brought them out of bondage in Egypt. As you have the time, you might want to read the entirety of Psalm 78. Verses 12-16 remind us of the "marvelous things He did in the sight of their fathers," how He "divided the sea," how He "led them with the cloud" and "brought streams out of the rock."

Their reaction? Entirely predictable by now: "But they sinned even more against Him" (verse 17) to the point God's anger was kindled (verse 21).

We could have expected Pharaoh, even in the face of miracle after miracle, to have continually hardened his heart (which, by the way, was hard from the beginning—he simply became more and more stubborn), but Israel? How many more miracles would it have taken?

If you wonder how many, read the story of Korah in Numbers 16. A mighty miracle was witnessed by the Israelites—the miracle of the ground literally opening up before their stunned eyes and swallowing Korah and his fellow complainers. Surely that would be enough to convince anyone that God was working through Moses and was a God to be reckoned with. Surely the letter writer would be satisfied if a similar miracle took place today?

What was the reaction? One of humble repentance? Hardly. Read verse 41: "On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, 'You have killed the people of the Lord.'" Absolutely astonishing. How did they think Moses pulled off such a feat—opening the earth and swallowing them up?

In all this, there's not too much evidence that miracles—in the sense of

public displays of power—are the answer to the needs of man.

As we draw to an end, please also consider Hebrews 3:7-12.

Even in the face of undeniable miracles, sin can and does deceitfully harden our hearts. The most important power for softening hard hearts is the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit. God's calling and the gift of the Holy Spirit is what all people ultimately need. Sure, miracles—signs and wonders—gain initial attention. But not always, as we have seen, positive or life-changing attention. The answer to the needs of man is found in scriptures such as Hebrews 10:15-16, which tells of the writing of God's laws in our hearts.

I would like to quote from the answer we sent the letter writer who was looking for miracles to prove God is working in our midst.

"Even when God does speak and interact directly with us as He did with the likes of Elijah and Enoch, man will still not repent. No, miracles are not the answer, at least not the miracles you spoke about in your letter, but rather the miracle of true conversion is what man so desperately needs.

"Were their needs greater than ours, as you posed in your letter? No. All mankind has the same need—the Spirit of the Living God, miraculously dwelling and working in their hearts and minds. Let us be searching for that lasting miracle, not the fleeting, attention-getting miracles that usually lead no one anywhere.

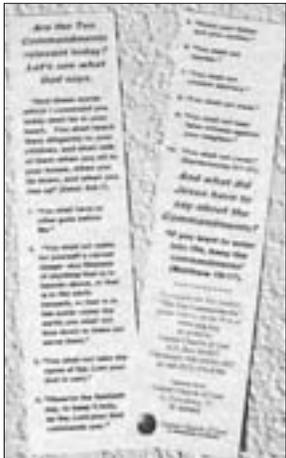
"As much as miracles are great and wonderful, they never have and never will convert the hard, stony heart of man. Only the miracle of the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit will ever perform that miracle. And that is what God is doing today, through the work of His Church and people, as He offers the opportunity for the miracle of a transformed, Spirit-led life to those who are willing to accept that gift—that miracle." UN



Local Church Updates

St. Petersburg Distributes Ten Commandments Bookmarkers

Members of the St. Petersburg, Florida, congregation recently designed and printed 25,000 copies of a bookmarker



Bookmarker produced by the St. Petersburg, Florida, congregation featuring the Ten Commandments

featuring the Ten Commandments to distribute free of charge to the public. Made of laminated cardstock, the bookmarker begins by posing the following question: "Are the Ten Commandments relevant today?" It continues, "Let's see what God says." It then quotes Deuteronomy 6:6-7 which says, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." The Ten Commandments follow this text.

After the Commandments, another question is posed: "And what did Jesus have to say about the Commandments?" Matthew 19:17 is then quoted, which says, "...if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." At the bottom of the second side of the bookmarker is an offer for a free copy of our booklet, *The Ten Commandments*. The Church's logo and the home office address and phone number are also visible at the bottom of the bookmarker.

This project was a combined effort of approximately a dozen members coordinated by David Treybig, pastor

of the St. Petersburg and Tampa congregations. This work was a refinement of a previous effort by St. Petersburg members Alan Davis and Michael Johnson, which cited scriptural references to the Ten Commandments in the New Testament.

Realizing that space was limited, the group decided to have the new bookmarkers focus on the Commandments themselves and God's comments regarding them. After refining the appearance, a sample was sent to Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services operation manager, for his approval. Members plan to distribute the bookmarkers to individuals, Bible bookstores and other outlets that will distribute them free of charge.

If any other congregations would like to print and distribute these within their local area, the St. Petersburg congregation will gladly share the setup and text of the bookmarkers. The cost to produce each bookmarker was approximately 7 cents. To request a copy of this text, contact Michael Johnson at (727) 577-1620 or by E-mail at michael1johnson@hotmail.com. Free samples were made available at selected Feast sites.

David Treybig

67 Preteens Learn "God's Way Works" at Camp Ironwood

The spectacular outdoors of southeastern Minnesota was the setting for



Justin Boyer horsing around; swimming was also a highlight at Camp Ironwood. More photos see www.ucg-calm.org/preteen_camp.htm

the North Central Region Preteen Youth Camp attended by 67 campers from six states. The camp was held from Aug. 11 to 14 at Camp Ironwood Springs located near Rochester, Minnesota (about 90 miles south of Minneapolis).

One goal of camp was to enrich our children's relationship with God and with Christian youth and families, so each day began with Christian Living classes to give the campers a spiritual basis for the day. The theme for camp was "God's Way Works!"

Campers had the opportunity to participate in many activities that included crafts, swimming, field games, nature and exploring, music, indoor games, team challenge and novelty Olympics.

One highlight for the children was the opportunity to go horseback riding. Camp codirector Kathe Myers commented, "All our campers were able to experience new things here at camp and that included every child riding a horse. The campers experienced the fact that fun and God's way go hand in hand." Camper Luke Nelson agreed: "Riding the horses was the best!"

Camp also stressed the importance of friendship. Jacob Yule, a 10-year-old from La Crosse, Wisconsin, said, "It's fun to make new friends and be with people who believe like you do. Camp is great!"

Steve Myers

Camp Buckeye Serves 88 Preteens a Taste of the Millennium

"Next to the Feast of Tabernacles, camp is probably the closest experience to a millennial environment that we can have here on earth," wrote Dave Myers, camp director, to the Camp Buckeye staff members before camp this year. There are many reasons why Camp Buckeye, the Great Lakes Region Preteen Camp for 2002, was close to a millennial experience.

Camp Buckeye is nestled in the peaceful, rolling hills of Amish country in Beach City, Ohio. From July 28 to 31, 2002, one could hear the joyful sounds of laughter from campers, teens and adults who came from 11 states and Canada to be a part of this preteen camping adventure. Even though the temperatures were incredibly hot this year, the fun was not dampened.

Since its beginning in 1995, the Great Lakes Region Preteen Camp has steadily grown in participation and programming excellence. This year there were 88 campers, 39 teen staff members (staff-in-training) and 29 adult staff members. The total size of 156 is larger than some of our UCG teen camps.

The staff, under Mr. Myers' direction, provided more than 15 different activities in which the 6- to 12-year-old

campers participated. The children participated in swimming, fishing and playing on the "slip



Camp Buckeye, from top: Dave Myers tries things backwards; boys' dorm 2; arts and crafts staff (photos by Amy Gunn and Bev Gali)



and slide." They played basketball, volleyball, miniature golf and a number of field games. Campers had classes in leather crafts, where they made wristbands, necklaces and key chains, as well as classes in arts and crafts, which included tie-dyeing, making a nature mobile and creating "shrinky dinks."

Everyone participated in a day hike to a waterfall to jump and play in the cool, refreshing water. Hiking in a cave was a part of the camp experience for the older campers. All campers had Christian Living classes on themes that included honesty, the Ten Commandments, trust and modesty. The variety of activities was exceptional.

Traditions have become very much a part of this regional camp. Every morning the campers were greeted by Mr. Myers' resounding question, "How did you sleep last night?" This is followed by the campers' resounding reply, "IN A BED!" An all-camp scavenger hunt, sing-along and skit night have become much-anticipated traditions. Outstanding food has become a strong tradition at camp thanks to Rhonda Richmond from the Canton, Ohio, congregation and her excellent kitchen staff.

Coming back year after year is becoming a very strong tradition at camp as well. The 11- and 12-year-olds talk about, plan and look forward to coming back as teen staff members. The desire to come back to camp year after year is also felt by the teens and adults. No one wants to miss it!

Though successful activities and traditions are repeated, camp offers many new activities every year. This year an "Upside-Down and Backwards" dinner was introduced. All campers and staff came to dinner wearing their clothes backwards and/or upside down. Walking and speaking were done in a backward fashion. The best part of this was when the kitchen staff served the hot fudge



Emily Troyer, 14, a teen staff member from the Canton, Ohio, congregation, said, "It's not just about being with your friends or being cool. It is about helping out and being a good example."

The 2002 Great Lakes Region Preteen Camp at Camp Buckeye was a foretaste of the Millennium, because of the beauty, joy, interesting and creative activities, the fun, the education in God's way of life, the traditions, the service-orientation and the leadership. Most of all, camp

was special (yes, millennial) because of the focused attention on giving and our great God's blessing.

Beverly Galli

Austin/Waco Have Surprise Reception for Mr. and Mrs. Peoples

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Peoples were honored on Aug. 17, 2002, for his 27 years of service in the full-time ministry of the Church. He retired in 1997, so this reception in their honor was a little overdue, but an especially inspiring and eventful Sabbath helped to make up for the delay.

Aug. 17 seemed an ideal time to thank and recognize Bob and Ruby for the 27



Bob and Ruby Peoples

years plus the active contribution to the Austin congregation they have continued to make since his retirement. The combined Houston choir, which visited several congregations this summer and fall, was scheduled to present a choral

recital of sacred music during the first half of services at a combined Austin/Waco Sabbath service in Temple, Texas.

The reception was a complete surprise to the Peoples. The beginning of their surprise was when the Peoples saw their son and daughter-in-law, Gregg and Valerie from the Dallas area, and their daughter, Ashley, walk in. Immediately after the service, Don Hooser, the pastor of Austin, Waco and Coleman, began the presentation with some initial comments and thank yous. Then regional pastor Ken Giese, on behalf of United Church of God, thanked the Peoples for all their dedicated service in God's work and presented them with an engraved plaque from the Church. He also read letters of appreciation for the Peoples from various people they had served in the past.

Then everyone enjoyed a potluck meal and fellowship, which was capped off with the special cake and punch in honor of the Peoples. Bob and Ruby were deeply touched by all the expressions of appreciation toward them.

The choir of about 18 very talented members, led by William Crow, blessed the members with a wonderfully inspiring and professional presentation. Wherever they go, the Church members are deeply thankful that the choir members are willing to make the big sacrifices of time and effort to practice and travel in order to share their music. The choir members enjoyed the sound more than usual, because we were meeting in a concert hall with excellent acoustics and a top-of-the-line sound system. The accompanists, Pam Sutton and Jennifer Ellison, enjoyed playing the nine-foot Steinway grand piano.

The sermon, titled "The Most Important Thing," was given by Mr. Giese, who also is a member of the choir.

Don Hooser

Southern Alberta Women Helping Keep Canada Warm

Some homeless Canadians are staying a little warmer in winter, thanks in part to some industrious women in the southern Alberta congregations.

Over the past two years, more than a dozen women in the Calgary and Lethbridge congregations have crocheted a combined total of over 60 blankets. These blankets were given to an organization that donates them to the homeless and underprivileged.

Blankets for Canada, established in Lethbridge in 1998, gives free blankets to "organizations that care for people without shelter and in need of warmth in Canada." All blankets that are made and donated in a certain area are distributed locally.

A member in Lethbridge first introduced the Church to the project and began encouraging other women to start making blankets, including Calgary's Connie White.

Mrs. White presented the idea to the Calgary women in the summer of 2000 during a Ladies' Tea. A mini "crochet



Making Blankets for Canada in Calgary: Shelly Molnar, Jennifer Poffenroth, Agnes Belanger, Melanie Davie, Pat Snyder, Liz Trenerry, Chelsey Petersen, Connie White and Dolly Petersen. Missing from the photo: Heidi Poffenroth, Della von Holland and Rebecca von Holland

class" was organized for those who had never crocheted before. Then the women got busy.

Mrs. White drums up donations for the wool and distributes it to the volunteers. She then collects the finished blankets and drops them off at a wool shop in Calgary. This shop, in turn, hands them over to Blankets for Canada.

"I thought it was a valuable project for the women to be involved with," says Mrs. White. "They've put a lot of hard work and creativity into those blankets."

For more information on Blankets for Canada, visit their Web site at: www.blankets4canada.ca.

This article first appeared in United News Canada.

Ruth Kerr

Members Can Help Attract Attention to Church Web Sites

"Everyone in the Church who uses E-mail can help drive Internet traffic to our Church Web sites," Dan Deininger said at an Internet seminar at the Kelowna, British Columbia, Feast site. Mr. Deininger, an elder serving in Montana who facilitated the volunteer Internet Task Force study last year, brought several ideas and updates to the group of about 25 Church members at the seminar.

United has a growing Internet presence in the number of visitors, literature requests and even in the number of Web sites, when local congregation and affiliated sites are considered. Mr. Deininger envisions the Internet becoming a much more powerful tool in doing "the work" as we become more proficient and creative in Internet usage. He painted a picture of our main Web site becoming a "destination" or "home page" type site for many users.

The way each member can help drive Internet traffic to Church Web sites is very simple. Virtually all E-mail programs, either computer resident or Web based, have a Preferences, Tools or Options menu that allows individual users to create personalized "signatures" that are sent with every E-mail generated or forwarded.

300 people generate 1 million E-mail messages per year!

Here are a few sample "signatures" that could be used or modified as desired:

- Tired of reading news stories full of hopelessness? Disgusted with crime, drugs, violence and corruption? Try reading some good news for a change: www.gnmagazine.org
- Want some Good News? Check out www.gnmagazine.org
- "I have always said, I always will say, that the studious perusal of the sacred volume will make better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands." Thomas Jefferson Find out for yourself... www.ucg.org/bsc
- ***Virtual Christian Magazine*** hope and encouragement for the real world www.vcmagazine.org
- Where is the world headed? www.ucg.org/wnp

With just a few keystrokes, each member who uses E-mail can help grow our Internet presence and impact our world by creating an E-mail signature line to help spread the Good News!

Larry G. Hardison

Brothers Serve as Vice Presidents and Ministers

"We owe it all to our older Brother," explain brothers Bruce and Leif Anderson. The first and third of five brothers now serve both as vice presidents in a successful family business and as local elders in the Little Falls, Minnesota, congregation. In addition to Jesus Christ, Bruce and Leif attribute their success to their physical father's training, athletics, Ambassador College and experience in the full-time ministry.

The family business, Anderson Chemical Company (www.andersonchemco.com), began in 1911 when Bruce and Leif's grandfather, Alfred Anderson, began supplying cleaning products to dairies. Service was later extended to other food processors and expanded to include the institutional

and water treatment markets. Very few family businesses endure to the third generation. This one both survived and thrived. Revenues more than doubled in the past decade and the company now employs 70.

Bruce and Leif's father (also named Bruce) was a principled man who not only encouraged saving and conservative financial management, but also taught his sons to memorize the Ten Commandments. He gave each son a Bible (along with the primary Christian Scientist text, *Science & Health*). Their dad left an "extraordinary legacy and gave us a great base to build upon," reflects Bruce.

The Andersons learned about God's truth when Bob Hedin, the son of a good customer, was hired to work during the summer of 1967. Working beside him, Bruce noted Bob set a very fine example. One night at dinner, the Andersons' father mentioned that Bob's dad was disappointed because his son was transferring to "some crackpot religious school in Texas."

"That got your attention," said Leif. "Yeah, I was looking for crackpots," joked Bruce, who was then a junior at the University of Minnesota. "So I started quizzing Bob. I had a number of questions and had been searching for the past year." The answers he began to find led him to read Church literature, visit with a pastor and begin attending services in the then three-year-old Minneapolis congregation.

Four Anderson sons departed for various Ambassador College campuses over the next few years, similarly disappointing their own father. Fortunately, the relationships were restored before their father's early death in 1977. One by one, brothers returned to the family business in the following years. "It took four of us to replace Dad," Leif observed.

Both brothers want the business to be a blessing to its employees, to the



Bruce and Leif Anderson, vice presidents of Anderson Chemical Company and elders in Little Falls, Minnesota (photos by Sharon Babcock)



community and to the marketplace. In addition to serving customers, the company offers its facilities for Boy Scout activities, local library board meetings and UCG church services. Construction of a new building was completed in 2000. One side of the building was terraced down to the basement level so those in labs could work in natural

window-light just as the executives on the top floor. Visitors will note numerous wildlife prints—a link to the company's support of Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever. The company also donates to local food shelves.

"God, our competition doesn't play by the same rules and it's not a level playing field, so level it out a little bit for us," Leif prays. They're both comforted by God's promise in Romans 8:28 that all things work together for the good of those who love Him. This "gives you the long-term perspective you need when you're making decisions," said Bruce.

Their witness is primarily a quiet one. Bruce explained, "From a distance, you can use a trumpet to proclaim the gospel. For example, we can be bold in publications. But the closer you are to people, especially working one-on-one with individuals, you have to be a light. The Bible says 'Let your light shine'—not your loudspeaker. We're particularly sensitive to that because when people know you're ministers, they tend to give you a little distance—the radar goes up."

Ministry and business both require the ability to relate to and get along with all types of people. Bruce describes the company's culture as one with a lot of laughter, a "key indicator of a healthy internal environment." Furthermore, "We trust our employees, and I think that's mutual. If you don't have to have someone watching over everyone's shoulder, that keeps costs down."

Bruce believes that "the Bible's all about empowerment. God's empowering us for the rest of eternity with more power than anybody can even begin to imagine. We try to do the same thing, which unleashes people's creative energy and results in synergism—the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts."

"First and foremost, we're in business to set an example, to carry on the legacy of our dad," said Leif. "Imperfectly as our example is set, it does have an impact. Employees understand something's different and connect how we conduct ourselves with the fortunes of the business. God has definitely blessed the business and taken us through some tough times."

"It's amazing to see the effect on employees when they know they don't have to conduct themselves in the marketplace like most businesses," said Bruce. "We can take the burdens of lying and sabotage off their shoulders. I think our employees are emboldened to stand on principle because of where we draw the line."

Bruce and Leif feel God will continue to bless the company as they try to represent Him well in their management efforts.

Sharon Babcock

Bob Jones Retires After 35 Years

Bob Jones retired from the full-time ministry of the United Church of God

on the Sabbath of Oct. 12, 2002, in Jacksonville, Florida. Regional pastor Harold Rhodes and Richard Thompson participated in this celebration of the Jones' retirement by presenting Mr. Jones and his wife, Mary, with a crystal plaque from the Church and a congratulatory card from Roy Holladay, president of UCGA, and Richard Pinelli, Ministerial Services operation manager.

Mr. Jones was baptized on Oct. 20, 1963, in Portland, Oregon, and began working for the Church in August of 1964 as a plumber. He was involved in doing various jobs for the Church through June of 1967 then was assigned to be a ministerial trainee.

Mr. Jones was ordained as a local elder four months later on Oct. 22, 1967, at the Feast of Tabernacles at Jekyll Island, Georgia, by Herbert Armstrong.

During the next 12 years he served in the following areas: Greensboro, North Carolina; St. Paul, Minneapolis and Rochester, Minnesota; and St. Petersburg and Ft. Myers, Florida.

He began coordinating Feast sites at St. Petersburg from 1980 through 1984; Norfolk, Virginia, 1985 through 1992; and Jekyll Island, Georgia, from 1994 through 2002. Overall, he has been involved with Festival site coordination for the past 23 years.

Additionally, Mr. Jones has pastored congregations in Norfolk and Richmond, Virginia, and in 1993, he began pastoring the congregations in Jacksonville, Tallahassee and Orlando, Florida, until his retirement. The Jacksonville/Tallahassee/Orlando church circuit was over 600 miles!

Mr. and Mrs. Jones plan to remain in the Jacksonville area.

Harold Rhodes

First UCG Ladies' Day Held in Lagos

For the first time since United Church of God was organized in Nigeria in 1996, the Lagos Spokesman Club held a Ladies' Day on Sunday, Sept. 1, 2002. This comes more than three years after the Lagos Spokesman Club was inaugurated in March 1999 by Bill Cagle, an elder from Texas who was on a business trip to Nigeria. Since the first meeting of the club had been scheduled during his visit, it fell on Mr. Cagle to direct that first meeting. There were only six men in attendance.

Following this, with the support and direction of Fred Kellers and Dale Schurter who have had the pastoral oversight for the congregations in Nigeria, the Spokesman Club began to take shape. As the congregation grows, so does the membership of the club.

At the first Ladies' Day, 11 members and their dates participated and had a really happy and meaningful time. They met in the congregation's rented meeting hall, named Ambassador Suite, specially decorated for the occasion. The theme was "Building Good Relationships."

Oludare Akinbo and his wife, Olutoun, handled table topics, which largely reflected the day's theme. Olu-

ranti Oguntayo, a young lady with a sonorous voice, rendered a beautiful song at the interlude.

Olwagunwa Ibirogba handled the job of toastmaster. Four speeches, which gave very helpful tips and encouragement on building good relationships, were given by Ezekiel Alimi



Samuel Olutunji Oguntayo, president of the Lagos, Nigeria, Spokesman Club, gives welcome address at Ladies' Day; above right, Oluranti Oguntayo sings

("Making and Keeping Friends"), Oludotun Ibirogba ("Three Tenets of Good Relationships"), Olumuyiwa Akin-Ogundeji ("Communication as a Means of Building Good Relationships") and Samuel Olutunji Oguntayo, club president ("How You Can Live Peacefully With Others").

In the ambience of well-selected music, members and their dates enjoyed a sumptuous two-course meal prepared by Omolola Ibirogba, a young lady in the Lagos congregation who is a professional caterer.

O. Akin-Ogundeji

Member's Letter of Appreciation for Pastor Printed by Focus on the Family

The October 2002 issue of *Focus on the Family* magazine included a letter from Houston, Texas, member Marilyn Braley expressing appreciation for a pastor. Though the pastor's name wasn't printed, she was excited to tell others about her appreciation for Don Hooser, who now pastors the Austin, Coleman and Waco, Texas, congregations.

The letter as printed in the "Front Porch" section of *Focus on the Family* read:

"In honor of Clergy Appreciation Month, here's a tribute to a few pastors:

"Home away from home

"My son was incarcerated 269 miles from home. I visited him twice a month, which wiped out my weekends.



When the pastor of the church I attended near the prison found out about my trips, he took action. He asked people in the church to put me up when I was in town. During that year, staying in the homes of church family made those long weekends fun and saved me money on motels and food. Plus, I made several good friends. Their friendship didn't stop when my son was transferred and later released. People continued praying for him and kept up with his situation—thanks to a wonderful pastor.—Marilyn Braley, Houston"

Pittsburgh Celebrates Pastor Appreciation Day

To the Pittsburgh congregation of the United Church of God, PA doesn't just stand for the abbreviation for Pennsylvania. As of Oct. 20, 2001, it also stands for Pastor Appreciation Day.

The inspiration for the occasion sprang from the hearts of Ron and



Don and Rannie Henson honored with cake of appreciation

Brenda Grebur, and their enthusiasm for the project spread throughout the congregation.

Quietly, secretly, donations were given with willing hearts to purchase gifts. With glistening eyes and lumps in many throats, the brethren sat hushed as Brenda Grebur spoke these words to Don and Rannie Henson:

"The Bible says a pastor who serves God and His people faithfully is worthy of a double honor. We are celebrating Pastor Appreciation Day because we have a pastor and his wife who deserve the honor. It is very important that you both know how much we appreciate all that you do. The endless hours you spend driving to three church areas; visiting the brethren and anointing the sick and preparing schedules, calendars and meetings for three churches and keep-

ing it all running pretty smoothly—well, most of the time!

"For the time you spend preparing sermons and Bible studies to teach us more of God's ways. The times you patiently listen to our problems, our frustrations, our fears, our pain and our tears. You have gently guided us with compassion and love. You gently lead us to the Kingdom of God.

"As a husband and wife, you set a wonderful example of two people who really love, respect and deeply care for one another. But more importantly, we thank you for your commitment and dedication to God and us. Thank you both for your labor of love!"

The gifts presented to Mr. and Mrs. Henson were a beautiful mantel clock, which Mr. Henson quickly claimed for his study, and a lovely couch throw, inscribed with Jeremiah 3:15: "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

Val Maurer, our local poet, composed a poem in tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Henson which ended with:

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Henson
"We want you to see
"That you are such a blessing
"To your Pittsburgh family."

A cake inscribed with "Congratulations Mr. and Mrs. Henson," made by our resident baker, Joan Ball, provided all with a follow-up snack.

Lee Hart

Cleveland Sponsors Camp-Out and Softball Tournament

The Cleveland, Ohio, congregation held its second annual camp-out and softball tournament July 20 and 21, 2002. Teens kicked off the weekend at Sabbath services by leading songs, delivering the sermonette, providing opening and closing prayers and special music, as well as acting as ushers, greeters and servers at the refreshment table. There were about 150 brethren in attendance.

Services concluded and about two thirds of the group trekked to the Litchfield homestead of Greg and B.J. Thomas for an afternoon of food, fun and fellowship. The UCG Northeast Ohio Teen Speech Club, its ranks swelled by many campers, met near the back of the property for their monthly meeting. Other brethren took lazy paddleboat rides and shared thoughts under any available patch of shade.

That night more than a dozen tents lined the yard's south edge. About 80 people

spent the night under the stars or in the Thomas' home.

After sunset many younger campers gathered around the campfire for a night of hot dogs and marshmallows. Others joined in a sing-along or helped get concessions ready for the next day's activities. A few, who somehow kept their energy in spite of the warm evening, engaged in a shadowy game of capture the flag and cooled off in the Thomas' pond or pool.

The softball tournament kicked off at 10 a.m. the next morning at a field in nearby Penfield. Teams from Cleveland; Portsmouth, Ohio; two teams made up of speech club members; and



Erik Jones, president of the Northeast Ohio Teen Speech Club, conducts business session at Cleveland camp-out and softball tournament

pickup teams of campers from various areas of the region enjoyed a full day of softball.

Kristin Yarbrough

Oregon Member Featured on Front Page

The Grants Pass, Oregon, *Daily Courier* ran a front-page article about member Mike Hunicke Oct. 10, 2002.

The article, "He's One Special Bus Driver," reported on Mr. Hunicke's exemplary service transporting special education students. It quotes Principal Kathie Hill as saying, "He shows such compassion for our kids and their special needs. He is so patient and so kind, and the kids and parents love him."

Mike Hunicke and his wife, Helen, attend the Medford, Oregon, congregation.



Member Mike Hunicke makes the front page

Announcements

Births



Kansas Grace Creager

Kendall and Christine Creager of Dayton, Ohio, are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Kansas Grace. She was born Aug. 7, 2002, and weighed 8 pounds 11 ounces. Big brother Casey, age 9, is very happy to have a new sister.

Daniel and Kimberly (Walker) Preston of Cincinnati, Ohio, are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, Andrew Jacob, born July 10, 2002, weighing 7 pounds 5 ounces.

The very happy grandparents are Alvin and Brenda Walker of Greensboro, North Carolina, and Charles and



Andrew Jacob Preston

Betty Preston of Cincinnati. Great-grandmothers are Dot Walker and Virgie Smith of North Carolina and Ollie Preston of Ohio.

Randy and Kori McKeegan of Bakersfield, California, are delighted to



Emily Anne McKeegan

announce the birth of their first child, Emily Anne. She was born on March 29, 2002 (10 weeks premature), weighing 1 pound 13 ounces and measuring 13 and 3/4 inches. She now weighs over 11 pounds and is doing wonderfully. Her proud grandparents are Fran Brosky, Don Brosky, Cynthia Alipio and Craig Jackson of Bakersfield, California.

Mark and Leah Wilson of Atlanta, Georgia, announce the birth of their first child, Michael Eric Wilson. Michael was born June 5, 2002, and weighed 6 pounds 14 ounces.

Grandparents are Eric and Sheila



Michael Eric Wilson

Wilson of Jefferson City, Missouri, and Raymond and Paulette Duncan of Lula, Missouri. Great-grandparents are Rellis and Pauline Wilson of California, Missouri, and Lorene Knott of Alabama.

Aaron and Dawn Booth are happy to announce the birth of their healthy baby girl, Brooklyn Eve. She arrived on Sept. 12, 2002, weighing 8 pounds 6 ounces and was 20 1/2 inches long.



Brooklyn Eve Booth

Proud grandparents are Jerry and Ardelle Schwartzrock from Fargo, North Dakota, and Les and Debbie Booth of West Lafayette, Indiana. This is Aaron and Dawn's first child.

Danny and Darla (Diggins) Taylor of Baltimore, Maryland, are happy to announce the birth of their first child, Kayla Jeanine, on April 13, 2002. Kayla weighed 7 pounds 14 ounces and was 20 3/4 inches long.

She is the 11th grandchild of Wayne and Jean Diggins and the third grand-



Kayla Jeanine Taylor

child of Dan and Cheryl Taylor.

Engagements

Brenda Gibbons of the New York City, New York, congregation, and Clarence J. Sloan proudly announce the engagement of their daughter, Danielle Yvonne Emilyn Sloan, to George Henry Carvajal. A May 2003 wedding is planned.

Melvin and Diane Rhodes of Lansing, Michigan, and Victor and Beverly Kubik of Indianapolis, Indiana, wish to announce the engagement of their children Alexandra Rhodes and Michael



Alexandra Rhodes and Michael Kubik

Kubik, both of Indianapolis. The wedding date has not yet been set.

Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Ketcham and Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Naylor Sr. of Apopka, Florida, are pleased to announce the engagement of their chil-



Donald Naylor and Rhonda Ketcham

dren, Rhonda and Donald. The wedding is planned for early 2004.

Weddings

Mr. and Mrs. Errol McIntosh of Lethbridge, Alberta, together with Mr. and

Mrs. Richard Pinelli of Cincinnati, Ohio, are pleased to announce the marriage of their children, Debbie and Jon.

The ceremony was performed by the groom's father in Eagle, Colorado, on Sept. 18, 2002. Maid of honor was the bride's sister, Tammy, and the groom's



Jon and Debbie Pinelli

sons, Justin and Kegan, served as best men. The couple reside in Eagle and attend the Grand Junction, Colorado, congregation.

Joseph and Mary Kay Filipiak of Grafton, Ohio, are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter, Mary Ann, to Brian J. Hegvold, son of David and Kathleen Hegvold of Houston, Texas. The wedding took place May 26,



Brian and Mary Ann Hegvold

2002, in Houston. The ceremony was performed by Jim Franks, pastor of the Houston North congregation, where the couple attend.

Glaister Douglas and Carmen Cristy were happily joined in marriage on Aug. 31, 2002, in Deltona, Florida. Richard Thompson, pastor of the Orlando, Jacksonville and Ocala, Florida, congregations, conducted the ceremony with 120 in attendance. A wonderful meal and dance followed, which helped to celebrate the joyous occasion.



Glaister and Carmen Douglas

Randy and Debbie Diggins of Baltimore, Maryland, are happy to announce the marriage of their daughter Melissa to Joseph Mihm, son of Ferdinand and



Joseph and Melissa Mihm

Lillian Mihm, on Sept. 2, 2002. The ceremony was performed by Brian Drawbaugh, an elder in the Cumberland, Maryland, congregation.

Melissa was attended by Michelle Diggins (maid of honor), Darla Taylor, Jaime Diggins and Taylor Foard (flower girl). Joe was attended by Scott Diggins (best man), Danny Taylor and Randy Diggins Jr.

James Andrew Shamblin and Ruth Louise Reynolds were united in marriage Sept. 30, 2002, in Ecola State Park,



Ruth and Andrew Shamblin

Cannon Beach, Oregon. The wedding was performed by Ward Shamblin, father of the groom and an elder in the Lubbock, Texas, congregation. Bridesmaids were Judy Hernandez, Clarajane Reynolds and Wilda Reynolds. Groomsmen were Jeff Kramer and Johnny Overton. The couple met while attending the 2002 class of Ambassador Bible Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Sharla Shamblin and Michael Turner were married April 5, 2002, at Bartlett's



Sharla and Michael Turner

HomePlace in Anson, Texas. The bride's attendants were Darci Barney and Michaela Turner. The groom's attendants

were Warren and Matthew Turner. The couple live near Austin, Texas.

Anniversaries

Hugh and Gloria Harden, of Mountain Home, Idaho, celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary on Aug. 25, 2002. The Boise, Idaho, congregation honored



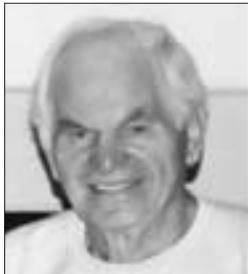
Hugh and Gloria Harden

them with cake and flowers at a reception following services on Aug. 24, 2002. Mr. and Mrs. Harden have been

members of the Boise congregation since 1968. They have four children, Lorinda Springer, David Harden, Becky Bennett and Talitha Ulsberger, and seven grandchildren.

Obituaries

Paul Shabi, 84, a member of the Las Vegas, Nevada, congregation, died June 21, 2002, after a five-month battle with lung cancer. He was born July 12, 1917,



Paul Shabi

in Smithton, Pennsylvania, and was married to his wife, Lela, in May 1953. He served in the 101st Airborne during World War II and retired in 1977 from Amoco Oil Refinery in Whiting, Indiana. He and his wife were baptized in 1964 and attended congregations in LaGrange, Illinois; Hammond, Indiana; Columbus, Indiana; Murfreesboro, Tennessee; and Las Vegas.

Mr. Shabi will always be remembered for his friendly disposition and his willingness to help anyone in need. He truly never met anyone he didn't like.

He is survived by his wife, Lela; son, Rick, and his wife, Deborah, of the Indianapolis, Indiana, congregation; daughter, Kathleen; and four grandchildren, Eric, Kristin, Kate and Patrick Shabi.

Harry Frank Aiguier, 67, a very highly respected member of the Worcester, Massachusetts, congregation, died peacefully in his sleep on June 30, 2002. He had a three-year-long battle with cancer. Harry is survived by his loving wife of 18 years, Linda, two sons and three daughters, four brothers, 20 grandchild-

dren, five great-grandchildren and many nephews and nieces. Born Aug. 22, 1934, he was a faithful servant to the very end.

Harry was a veteran of the Seabees during the Korean War. He was in trucking for most of his life and owned his own company.

Well over 200 people attended his funeral in Leominster, which reflected the high regard with which he was held.

He was baptized in the late '60s and first attended God's Church in Manchester, New Hampshire. He was ordained as a deacon in the United Church of God and also served as treasurer for the New England area.

His wife, Linda, thanks everyone for the many cards, letters and calls that she received during this very trying time.

Ron Colbeth, 50, died Aug. 11, 2002, at home surrounded by his family. He suffered with a rare form of cancer since February of this year.

Ron and his wife, Betsy, were married 31 years and were baptized into God's Church in 1972 by Robert Jones.

They attended the St. Paul, Minnesota, congregation until moving to Colorado in 1983 where they attended the Loveland congregation. Ron was active



Ron Colbeth

throughout his life with youth groups and church activities including song leading and giving sermons. He served on the board and volunteered for Meals on Wheels, serving his community. His motto was "Faith, Family and Friends" and these were the most important things to him.

Ron is survived by his wife, five children and three grandchildren.

Tribute: Gerald Waterhouse

It is doubtful that any minister has had more impact on God's people during this age of the Church of God than Gerald Waterhouse. No minister was known personally by more brethren around the world than was Gerald. He developed close and enduring friendships wherever he traveled in God's service. He deeply valued his close friendship with Herbert W. Armstrong.

Gerald was born Aug. 9, 1926, in the West Texas town of San Angelo, the second of five children, to Luther Isaac (Ted) and Ruth Waterhouse. His oldest brother, Roy, and his youngest brother, Van, live in San Angelo. His younger sister, Annece Havlik, lives in Crane, Texas. His brother, Don, pastors the UCG congregations in Columbia and Florence, South Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia.

Early on Gerald's interest turned to golf. As a youngster he caddied and played golf. At North Texas State Teachers College in Denton, Texas, he played on the golf team and traveled to golf competitions. His golfing experiences led to friendships with numerous well-known golfers. Several went on to play in the Seniors PGA even to this day.

He served in the Navy on various ships and carriers during both World War II and the Korean War. While in the Navy he married, but the marriage didn't survive his naval duty. Gerald remained unmarried the remainder of his life. Although he didn't have children of his own, he loved his many brothers and sisters in the faith all over the world.

The World Tomorrow

Gerald first heard the *World Tomorrow* on radio in 1949. He was visiting his family in Mountain Home, Texas, where they were living on a subsistence

income cutting cedar posts. His father, Ted, had been listening to the broadcast, yet had no interest in religion. Gerald was drawn to the voice and message of Herbert W. Armstrong. He subscribed to the literature of the Radio Church of God and soon realized he must change his life. He attended the Days of Unleavened Bread in Big Sandy, Texas, in 1953 where he was baptized. Little did he know the route his life would take from there.

Gerald entered Ambassador College in 1953 and graduated in 1956. He gave his first sermonette in November 1953 and his first sermon in 1954. He traveled throughout the United States on baptizing tours in 1954, 1955, 1956, 1958 and 1959. Mr. Armstrong ordained Gerald a preaching elder in 1956, a pastor in 1959 and an evangelist in 1963.

Around the World

Gerald served in four international offices. He replaced Richard Armstrong in London, England, in 1957. He expanded that regional office and pastored the London church, the first international congregation. Eighteen months later he opened the office in Sydney, Australia, served as regional director and pastored the churches in Sydney and Brisbane until December 1961. In 1962 he established the office in Manila, Philippines, represented the Church as regional director and pastored the church. His last overseas assignment was opening the office in Johannesburg, South Africa, as regional director and pastoring the congregation in Johannesburg.

In 1965 Gerald returned to the Church's headquarters in Pasadena, California. Soon thereafter Mr. Armstrong assigned him to travel and speak to the churches. His first tour began Jan. 13, 1966. Over a span of 25 years he conducted 11 worldwide tours. Including his travels to open international offices, speak in the churches and speak



Gerald Waterhouse

at Feast of Tabernacles sites, Gerald circled the globe 15 times. His personal contact with most of God's people around the world built a respect and love that remains to this day.

His first pastorate in the United States was in St. Louis and Springfield, Missouri. He also served as pastor in Denver and Pueblo, Colorado; Garden City, Kansas; Birmingham and Opp, Alabama; and San Angelo and Abilene, Texas. His last pastorate was in Miami, Florida 1977-1978. He also worked for two short periods in the Church Administration Department in Pasadena in 1975-76 and 1991-92.

Retirement and Failing Health

The Worldwide Church of God retired Gerald in August 1992 after more than 36 years of faithful service to God's Church. He moved to the Atlantic coastal city of Port St. Lucie, Florida, bought a home and settled

down to enjoy his retirement, play golf and occasionally visit the churches. He also assisted the pastor in the local congregation. Retirement had its advantages, but Gerald never lost hope that one day soon he would return to traveling and speaking to the churches around the world.

In 1997 Gerald began to suffer health problems including a swollen prostate, collapsed bladder and extreme toxemia. On death's door, he was hospitalized at that time and his health never recovered. His condition deteriorated to the point that he was moved to an assisted living facility near his brother, Don, in Tampa, Florida.

Gerald was moved to a new assisted living facility in Columbia, South Carolina, when Don was transferred to South Carolina in June 2002. As the first resident in this facility, he received undivided care. He was doing well, had a good appetite and enjoyed where he was living even though his health was

tenuous. His mobility deteriorated to the point that he used a walker or wheelchair. He could no longer attend Sabbath services.

Gerald was highly respected where he lived and developed a close relationship with several staff members. Joking with staff members and giving "thumbs up" built a short but enduring bond.

Sept. 3, 2002, Gerald enjoyed his lunch, laid down to rest as he was in the habit of doing. He called for an attendant and complained that he couldn't get his breath. The on-duty nurse and attendant helped him as much as they were able. At the age of 76 he went to "sleep" without suffering. As several members have remarked, "Gerald is now in his place of safety." Burk McNair and Richard Pinelli officiated at his graveside service and burial at the National Cemetery in Florence, South Carolina, on Sept. 9, 2002.

Much Remembered

Gerald will be remembered for his sermons which were sincere, single-minded, dynamic and filled with colorful word pictures of the Kingdom of God. Many brethren appreciated his ability to make the promises of the world tomorrow come alive. Most everyone remembers him punctuating his sermons with the question, "Get the point?"

Serving the brethren worldwide was his most fulfilling experience and one he wouldn't trade for any other job in the Church. He thoroughly loved what he did which was clearly reflected by his zeal, dedication, conviction and warmth.

His whole heart was focused on God's Kingdom and the part each of us will have in that government. His messages concentrated on God, Christ and their plan to solve mankind's ills at Christ's second coming. He never faltered nor wavered from this vision. He clearly sought God's Kingdom first!

Don Waterhouse

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

video for its sermon tape program, Feast of Tabernacles sermon videos, United Youth Camp promotional and informational videos, member and ministerial educational material, Ambassador Bible Center projects and other projects that come along. We trust this upgraded equipment will be a time saver and a worthwhile tool in the work of the Church," said Mr. Eddington.

Preparations Made for ABC 2003

As of Oct. 30, 39 students had been accepted to Ambassador Bible Center for 2003. Applications are due by Dec. 16. Orientation is set for Jan. 5, classes begin Jan. 6 and graduation is Aug. 10.

Two Ordinations and Two Ministerial Hires Announced

Jack Willoughby was ordained an elder on Trumpets, Sept. 7. He and his wife, Vicki, serve the Bentonville, Arkansas, congregation.

Jorge de Campos was ordained on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles in South Africa. He and his wife, Kathy, serve the Johannesburg congregation.

Ministerial Services announced the



Chris and Angela Moen and Jane and Gary McConaughy, new ministerial hires (photo by Janet Treadway)



What's New on the Web?

On www.ucg.org

■ See the streaming video sermon titled "Focus on the Kingdom of God" by Clyde Kilough. <http://www.ucg.org/RealAud/>

■ See the new sermon transcripts "The Sabbath in History and Prophecy" by Peter Eddington and "Seven Points for Child Rearing" by Darris McNeely. <http://www.ucg.org/deathh/transcripts.html>

■ See *Good News* radio schedule to Feb. 2. <http://www.ucg.org/radio>

On [vcmagazine.org](http://www.vcmagazine.org)

■ The November *Virtual Christian Magazine* has articles on "Only 17: Broken Laws—Broken Dreams," "Piggyback," "Saying Good-bye to

hiring of elders Chris Moen and Gary McConaughy. Mr. Moen and his wife, Angela, will train under Richard Thompson in Florida. Mr. McConaughy and his wife, Jane, will be attending ABC next session and training under Richard Pinelli in the Cincinnati East, Ohio, congregation.

'03 Camp Dates Set

The United Youth Camp dates for 2003 are:

Pinecrest, Missouri.....	June 11-18
Hye Sierra, California.....	June 29-July 6
Woodmen, Alabama.....	June 29-July 6
Tetons, Wyoming.....	July 7-17
Carter, Texas.....	July 20-27
Davidson, Oregon.....	Aug. 3-10
Heritage, Pennsylvania ..	Aug. 10-17
Winter, Wisconsin.....	Dec. 21-25

The Teton Challenger dates are pending National Park approval. For more on camps, see www.ucg.org/youthcamp/ and the articles on page 4.

Web Site Visitors Request Updates

We currently have 3,410 people

Our Family's Barn," "Little House on the Prairie" Thanksgiving" and "Don't Stand on Your Head!" <http://vcmagazine.org>

On [youthmagazine.org](http://www.youthmagazine.org)

■ *Youth United* has articles on "How to Treat the Opposite Sex," pornography, "What Your Appearance Says About You," body piercing, "Predicting Your Success," "One, but Not the Same," questions and answers and more. <http://youthmagazine.org>

Other Helpful Links

■ **Youth** and young adult site. <http://ucgyouth.org>

■ **Singles'** Web site for singles in the Church. <http://www.ucgsingles.org>

■ **UCG Race Relations** Committee site. <http://www.ucgrace.org>

■ **Good News Bible Reading Program** <http://www.ucg.org/brp>

■ **Good News Web site.** <http://gnmagazine.org>

■ **Local multimedia efforts.** <http://www.ucg.org/a/local/multimedia.htm>

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

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

receiving regular E-mail updates from www.ucg.org giving them listings of newly posted material. This is a 54 percent increase over the numbers of just six months ago. Approximately 60 new people are signing up each week!

In addition, 4,218 users are receiving E-mail updates whenever new material is posted at www.gnmagazine.org. This is a very helpful tool for our members and subscribers to use to keep abreast of what United is doing. You can easily subscribe by clicking on the Update Notification button (at ucg.org) or at the bottom of the opening page at gnmagazine.org.

In addition, our youth Web site at www.ucgyouth.org has an "E-list" update service with 688 people registered. When new information is added pertinent to young adults, teens and preteens, subscribers are sent an E-mail update. Teens, subscribe today!

Peter Eddington

Five New Radio Programs to Air

Gary Petty recorded five new *Good News* radio programs on Sept. 4. Four of the programs included interviews with

various ministers, which seems to be a format that works well. The new programs have been edited and will go on the air in November. The program titles are as follows:

- "The Great Disappointment?"
- "Whatever Happened to Sin?" with

Ralph Levy.

• "Secular Humanism" with Robert Dick.

• "Why Isn't Sex Safe?—Part 1" with Melvin Rhodes.

• "Why Isn't Sex Safe?—Part 2" with Larry Walker.

Good News radio is currently on 16 stations. The station line-up and program schedule are available on-line at www.ucg.org/radio.

Peter Eddington

Magazine Reprints GN Articles

Bible and Spade, a Christian-oriented magazine dedicated to biblical archaeology, requested and was given permission to reprint the lead article from the March-April issue of *The Good News* titled "Can You Believe the Bible?" They printed that article in their summer issue—complete with a strong

warning near the end of the article that, due to people's ignorance of what the Bible really teaches, the majority of mankind will be deceived by a great end-time religious system and leader!

Scott Ashley

New Assignments Announced

The Council of Elders announced Oct. 16 that Ed Smith was asked to fill a vacancy on the Amendment Committee, with Rick Avent as the alternate.

Mark Winner was named the new chairman of the Christ-Centered Servant Leadership task force, which will be holding a workshop Dec. 9 for the Council, regional pastors and home office staff.

Since Jim Franks is now chairman of the Doctrine Committee, Kevin Epps was chosen to replace him as chairman of the Doctrinal Advisory Committee. Mr. Epps stepped down as chairman of the Race Relations Committee, and Todd Carey was named chairman. Darris McNeely was named chairman of the Prophecy Advisory Committee.

Also Richard Thompson is no longer on the Doctrine Committee of the Council as reported in the August issue.

Winter Camp Deadline Extended to Dec. 1

Do you want to experience the fantastic friendship, education and fun of a United Youth Camp during your winter break? Then we have the activity for you! The eighth annual Winter Camp will be held Dec. 22 through 26. Campers will learn about God's way of life in a positive and enjoyable environment. This year's activities may include basketball, Christian Living Q&A, cross-country skiing, dance class, floor hockey, team challenge, tobogganing and more.

The camper application deadline has been extended to Dec. 1. Youth ages 12 to 18 are welcome as campers. Camper tuition is \$175 and high school staff is \$90. Free transportation will be provided to the Winter Camp from the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, airport on Dec. 21, after 6 p.m. and before mid-

night. Free transportation to the airport will be provided on Dec. 26, arriving at noon. Please plan arrivals and departures accordingly. There is an extra charge for room and meals for early arrivals. Please contact Gary and Gale Black for any transportation needs at (815) 963-2336 or E-mail them at gblack2@acrux.net.

Campers can download application material at www.ucg.org/youthcamp. Camper applications are also found in the *United Youth Camps 2002* magazine. For the latest Winter Camp news, visit www.wintercamp.org.

Camper check-in is Sunday morning, Dec. 22, and checkout is Thursday morning, Dec. 26. Staff orientation begins late afternoon on Dec. 21.

Steve Nutzman



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