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United News™

News of the United Church of God, an International Association

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www.ucg.org

February 2003

News At a Glance

French GN Relaunched

United is again printing a French-language edition of *The Good News* titled *Bonnes Nouvelles*. The last time we had a French edition was in May/June 1998. *The Good News* magazine is now being published in five languages—English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Treasurer's Report

The Church's income has continued to hold steady through the first half of this fiscal year (which began July 1, 2002). Though the regular tithes and offerings (Category One) are slightly below the budgeted amount, the strong Holy Day offerings of this past fall make it appear likely that we will receive total donations very close to the budget for total income by the end of the fiscal year. For this we are very grateful—to God (our ultimate Provider), and to the brethren and others who have faithfully supported the work of the Church.

Through Jan. 24, Category One income is up 1.86 percent compared to last year. The amount of increase budgeted for this year was 2.4 percent. The four fall Holy Day offerings exceeded the budget by \$115,000.

It appears that the final totals for this fiscal year will be either slightly above or slightly below the total budget of \$18,240,000, depending in large measure on the three spring Holy Day offerings.

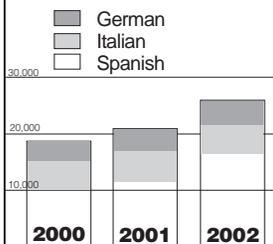
Our operation managers and employees have cooperated in this somewhat challenging year by controlling spending. For this we are also grateful.

As always, I request that the brethren join us in praying that God will give us wisdom in handling the financial resources that He makes available to the

See "News at a Glance," page 2

United Statistics

Language Versions of GN



Redesigned Site to Be More Usable and Effective

by Aaron Booth

Within the next few weeks, you will notice a significant change when you visit the United Church of God Web site. The Church's main Web site, www.ucg.org, is being redesigned in an effort to produce a more effective tool in preaching the gospel and preparing a people via the Internet.

The newly designed site will feature a new visual layout, complete with a new color palette, a new navigation menu structure, timely world news and much more. The overall goal of

redesigning the UCG site is to increase the usability and accessibility of information provided by the Church.

A new navigation menu bar has been developed to shorten download time and get the visitor to valuable content more quickly. Also, a more usable navigation structure was developed to make it easier to find information within the site. This was done with a consistent naming of sections and subsections that contain relevant information. The visual design was adjusted to allow for more eye-catching ad banners that link to articles and booklets and to deliver a consistent

page layout throughout the entire site.

Included within the new design of the home page is the ability to sign up for E-mail updates, view the Bible Reading Program topic for the day, view links to youth-related articles, click on visual ad banners for booklets and articles and view up-to-date world news headlines. Within the site, visitors will be able to view more images of various covers from the *Good News* magazine and printed booklets, see photos of the home office and its staff and find an informative Web site "Help" section.

What can you do to prepare to get the

most from the new Web site design? The site has been designed and developed to work with the newer Internet browsers so that recent technologies can be taken advantage of to make our visitors' experience more enjoyable. We hope you will take the opportunity to update your Internet browser; and if you are not sure how, we will have some helpful pointers within the new Help section. We hope you find the new design pleasing and more usable and accessible for you.

Aaron Booth was hired in December as Internet managing editor. See a sneak preview of the site on page 2. **UN**

Television Efforts Poised for Growth



Howard Davis and Randy Stiver on *Tomorrows* television; Steve Myers and Gary Petty on *Good News* television

by Peter Eddington

In today's fast-paced, technologically-advanced world, there are many opportunities and avenues available for preaching the truth of God's soon-coming Kingdom. The

United Church of God is taking advantage of several media including the printed word, the World Wide Web and radio broadcasting. One area that you may not hear a lot about

See "Television," page 6

Firstfruits of Mexican Web Site Baptized

by Larry Roybal

In December the ministry in Mexico saw the fruits of how the Internet has helped some find the Church.

A few months ago, the Calderon family, who live in Navojoa, Sonora (in the northern part of Mexico), started to write and ask questions about United. They were very interested in us because they were already Sabbath keepers and members of the Church of God (Seventh Day).

They had been separated from them because of some differences in doctrine mainly concerning Christmas keeping and because the church they were attending did not use unleavened bread for the Passover service. They did not want to compromise with this and so they separated themselves from fellowship with them.

Their search began. They started to look for Sabbath-keeping churches on the Internet and found one (a splinter group from the Worldwide Church of God) and asked for a visit. They were happy to have found another Sabbath-keeping church, but were saddened because the representative told them that they could in no way keep the Passover with them.

They were also a little skeptical because of the excessive use of Mr.

See "Mexican," page 3

Youth Education Team Meets in Tampa

Members of the Youth Education Team (YET) met in Tampa, Florida, Jan. 19 to 21 to review and plan programs for youth including preteen instruction programs, United Youth Camps, *Youth United* E-magazine and Youth Corps projects. Those in attendance included Larry and Bonnie Greider, Doug Horchak, Joel Meeker, Jim and Judy Servidio, David and Teddi Treybig

Doug Horchak, member of the Council and chairman of the YET, opened with an overview of where this team fits in United's educational efforts. Noting that we continually have new youth becoming eligible for our programs and that our youth represent some of the most fertile soil for sowing the seeds of the gospel, there will be a continuing need for the YET to coordinate spiritual educational efforts for our youth.

Preteen Programs

Jim and Judy Servidio, coordinators



Bonnie and Larry Greider, Joel Meeker, Doug Horchak, Judy and Jim Servidio and Teddi Treybig (photo by David Treybig)

site that our doctrinal position and Sabbath school policy has been not to use pictures of Jesus. While some outside resources cited in the lessons do include such pictures, such citations are not meant to undermine our policy.

Shifting to Festival instruction, plans are to revise the activity booklets for younger children. The team also concluded that an effort should be made to offer Festival educational materials or activities for middle school youth. Other plans include looking into producing a training video for teachers and placing resources and teaching tips on the Web site.

Youth Camps, Youth Corps

Larry Greider, overall United Youth

See "Youth," page 2

Inside:

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News At a Glance

Continued from page 1

Church. And, according to His will, to send increase, for the furtherance of His great work in these last days.

Tom Kirkpatrick

Meeker Joins Council

Joel Meeker will fill the spot on the UCGIA Council of Elders vacated by John Jewell, a joint letter from the chairman and president announced Jan. 17. At the May 2002 GCE annual meeting Mr. Meeker was the runner-up to Mr. Jewell, and will serve until the next meeting in May when the GCE must ratify his appointment. Clyde Kilough and Roy Holladay's Jan. 17 letter can be found on the Internet at www.ucg.org/a/news/pr-ch5.htm.

Hawkins Chosen as CEO, Ellams as Chairman of UCG in British Isles

The British National Council chose Peter Hawkins as the new CEO at a special meeting Jan. 26. At the meeting Chairman Frank Jarvis announced he was stepping down, and Bryan Ellams was named as the new chairman. Mark Webb was also appointed as secretary. Mr. Hawkins is a longtime minister



Peter Hawkins was welcomed back to the British Isles Dec. 14. His initial posting to South Africa was to help out for six months, which turned into 29 years (photo by Don Beard)

who recently returned to England after serving in South Africa for nearly 30 years.

"Becoming CEO is a great opportunity for me to assist in furthering the work of God in the land of my birth," said Mr. Hawkins. "My wife, Sonja (who is South African), and I have already been made to feel at home by the brethren and ministry.

"The last few weeks have not been easy for anyone, and there will be a period of time for some emotional healing to take place in the Church," said Mr. Hawkins. "We look forward to working with the members of the National Council and brethren here in a collaborative

See "News at a Glance," page 16



- 1 New tabbed navigation bar with drop-down menus from the homepage.
- 2 Today's Good News Bible Reading Program featuring the day's reading topic.
- 3 Timely featured articles from current articles and booklets.
- 4 New visual ads for articles and booklets.
- 5 View new updates to the ucg.org Web site.
- 6 Find articles relevant to the Middle East.
- 7 Sign up for UCG member updates and UCG Web site updates.
- 8 Newsletter section highlighting past articles and booklets dealing with current world issues.
- 9 New! View up-to-date world news headlines, and read the articles from various world news sources.

Preview of new Web site design for www.ucg.org. See article, page 1

"Youth," continued from page 1

Camp (UYC) coordinator, covered trends developing within our camp program. Campers want more biblical instruction in practical and relevant presentations. Last year 853 teens attended our camps. This year we will receive American Camping Association (ACA) accreditation visits once again. At Winter Camp 2002, we received an ACA visit and no standards were missed. Three additional camps, Pinecrest, Woodmen and the Teton Challenger Camp, will receive visits this coming summer.

For 2003, we anticipate having approximately 800 campers—a slight reduction from last year due to demographic trends within United. This year we will transition from Camp Oakhurst to Camp Hye Sierra where James Capo will serve as director. Also this year the minimum age to attend camp will be 12. Long-term, we would eventually like to establish a challenger camp in the south-eastern part of the United States.

Work is currently underway for the UYC magazine, which will highlight our camps and explain how youth may apply. Plans are also underway to produce another 18- to 20-minute video to be sent out to all congregations within the next few months.

Covering Youth Corps projects, Joel Meeker showed PowerPoint slides of last year's projects in Ghana and South Africa. This year projects will likely be offered at youth camps in the Philippines, South Africa, Ghana and Jamaica. Projects are also being considered that focus on teaching computer skills in Ghana and a one-year term of service teaching basic academic skills and Bible classes to children at Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

After the meeting everyone enjoyed dinner at the home of David and Teddi Treybig—the location of the meetings, meals and lodging for those attending. Next morning meetings resumed at 9.

Youth United

David Treybig, managing editor of Youth United E-magazine, began the day with a review of progress of this Web-based publication for teens and young adults. Articles on Darwinism, military

service, dating, love, sex and marriage continue to receive the highest numbers of hits. Over the past year four issues were produced and the number of reviewers has been expanded. A new feature, "News for Youth," was introduced in the January 2003 issue.

As for future plans, the staff hopes to add comments from readers and hopes that the E-magazine will become a printed magazine in the next fiscal year. Considering that the youth of the Church are one of the most obvious sources of new members, it is the unanimous belief of the Youth Education Team that making Youth United a printed magazine needs to be a top priority in the next budget.

The discussion then turned to the subject of modesty. Using a PowerPoint presentation produced by Jim Franks as a springboard, the team discussed methods to instruct both men and women on the biblical principles regarding dress, articles to be written for various Church publications and how to work with the team producing this material.

Young Adults

The team reviewed the young adult Festival Bible study that was presented at U.S. sites last fall. Feedback from participants was largely positive. Suggestions for improvement ranged from having stronger biblical material to having presenters more skilled with PowerPoint—the format used for the studies.

Next came a discussion of family weekends and young adult weekends, which are being conducted in many regions across the United States. Regardless of the structure, the team noted that it would be helpful to have a repository of the subjects and material presented to share with those preparing seminars.

The next item considered was development of a parenting video on how to teach children God's truths. Jim Servidio agreed to take on the responsibility of coordinating this project and hopes to complete it in the coming year.

On Tuesday the team reviewed a list of action items including deadlines for the various projects and programs they oversee. Finally, next year's budget was reviewed and input given regarding themes for Youth United.

David Treybig

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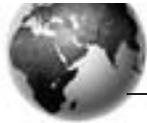
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Internet access on your computer:

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



News From **Around the World**

Good News Circulation Around the World

Country/Territory .. 2001	2002	2003	Country/Territory .. 2001	2002	2003	Country/Territory .. 2001	2002	2003	Country/Territory .. 2001	2002	2003				
Albania	0	2	Ecuador	51	18	Lesotho	5	0	Singapore.....	49	65	98			
Algeria	1	7	Egypt	20	31	Libya	5	8	Slovakia	5	14	16			
Angola	0	1	El Salvador.....	1,010	901	660	Lithuania	16	18	Slovenia	1	0	2		
Anguilla	3	1	Eritrea	2	10	16	Luxembourg	4	11	Solomon Islands	1	10	9		
Antigua & Barbuda.....	4	9	Estonia	10	12	12	Macau	2	2	1	South Africa	5,387	7,810	14,908	
Argentina	19	297	440	Ethiopia	7	216	Macedonia.....	4	6	9	South Korea.....	6	14	13	
Armenia	0	0	1	Finland	99	13	10	Madagascar.....	2	2	2	Spain	13	33	63
Aruba	1	2	1	Fiji	151	200	415	Malawi	111	225	503	Sri Lanka.....	13	27	28
Australia	6,009	10,137	16,041	France	35	29	34	Malaysia	161	223	240	St. Kitts & Nevis.....	5	7	2
Austria	29	55	20	French Guiana.....	0	1	4	Malta	17	11	11	St. Lucia	325	430	445
Bahamas	1,054	466	1,129	French Polynesia.....	1	1	1	Martinique.....	2	2	2	St. Vincent & Grenadines	5	7	206
Bahrain	7	6	4	Gabon	1	2	1	Mauritius	218	242	298	Sweden	63	159	167
Bangladesh	0	1	1	Gambia	63	93	86	Mexico	5,879	5,100	5,557	Switzerland	42	43	68
Barbados	714	1,287	1,253	Germany.....	2,896	3,780	4,133	Moldova	7	10	18	Tahiti	0	2	2
Belarus	5	15	12	Ghana	456	652	834	Morocco	0	2	8	Taiwan	5	6	6
Belgium.....	4	46	18	Greece	7	17	24	Myanmar.....	16	31	41	Tanzania	18	45	70
Belize	5	6	3	Grenada	5	6	7	Namibia	3	3	3	Thailand	19	31	33
Benin	1	1	1	Guadeloupe.....	1	1	0	Nepal	0	0	1	Togo	2	6	3
Bermuda	9	12	9	Guatemala	1,230	1,234	1,224	Nauru	0	2	2	Tonga	3	2	1
Bhutan	0	0	1	Guinea	1	2	2	Netherlands	91	808	1,207	Trinidad & Tobago	650	2,312	2,013
Bolivia	6	166	219	Guinea-Bissau.....	0	1	0	Netherlands Antilles	5	5	2	Tunisia	2	2	2
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3	6	6	Guyana	174	224	318	New Caledonia	0	2	3	Turkey	8	15	21
Botswana	7	5	7	Haiti	0	1	4	New Zealand	2,001	1,861	1,732	Turks & Caicos	1	3	2
Brazil	65	124	220	Honduras.....	80	78	209	Nicaragua	15	48	51	Uganda	3	4	2
British Virgin Islands.....	1	1	2	Hong Kong	27	40	60	Nigeria	697	934	1,535	Ukraine	27	43	41
Brunei	1	1	4	Hungary.....	9	14	15	Niue Island	0	3	2	United Arab Emirates	17	36	30
Bulgaria	4	16	9	India	229	753	873	Norway	20	13	17	United Kingdom.....	3,246	1,511	1,808
Cameroon	17	23	50	Indonesia.....	205	227	231	Oman	6	9	10	United States.....	276,940	412,301	349,904
Canada	13,890	13,140	14,992	Iran	47	155	135	Pakistan	41	74	91	Uruguay	4	15	12
Cayman Islands.....	1	2	2	Iraq	6	12	15	Panama	22	38	54	Uzbekistan.....	0	1	2
Central African Republic.....	1	2	2	Ireland	60	30	45	Papua New Guinea	302	259	387	Vanuatu	1	14	16
Chile	3,037	2,557	2,723	Isle of Man	79	45	110	Paraguay	3	4	3	Venezuela	60	99	137
China	19	26	35	Israel	6	6	14	Peru	1,247	1,255	1,473	Vietnam	18	18	17
Colombia	361	275	365	Italy	5,000	5,340	5,088	Philippines	3,199	5,271	8,448	Yugoslavia.....	35	34	29
Cook Islands	0	2	3	Ivory Coast	0	1	0	Poland	29	25	9	Zambia	210	281	606
Costa Rica	14	83	145	Jamaica	1,154	1,785	2,331	Portugal.....	21	22	24	Zimbabwe	147	1,005	1,403
Croatia	4	12	15	Japan	11	19	17	Qatar	1	3	3	TOTALS.....	340,627	489,171	450,512
Cuba	41	111	2	Jordan	6	7	6	Romania	10	21	25				
Cyprus	2	3	5	Kazakhstan	1	1	0	Russia	43	63	54				
Czech Republic.....	5	26	22	Kenya	342	813	898	Rwanda	1	2	2				
Dem. Rep. of Congo.....	1	1	3	Kuwait	12	14	14	Samoa	0	3	2				
Denmark	11	10	9	Kyrgyzstan.....	0	1	1	Saudi Arabia	34	50	55				
Dominica	242	304	374	Latvia	12	11	11	Seychelles	1	1	2				
Dominican Republic.....	15	19	40	Lebanon.....	3	5	3	Sierra Leone	0	3	1				

Includes all language editions and versions as of the January-February issues.

"Mexican," continued from page 1

Armstrong's name (which they did not know) instead of using Jesus Christ's name.

After the visit from this other organization, they felt frustrated and saddened but knew that God would lead them homeward again. So they began to look for another Sabbath-keeping group and came across Unidamex (the United Web site in Mexico) and began to submit their questions via the Internet.

Requesting a Visit

They exchanged many messages with Adan Langarica, the minister in San Luis Potosí who also serves the congregation in Tepic Nayrit, which is 12 hours away from where they live in Sonora. Mr. Langarica answered their questions

for some time, and after they were sure this was the church they were looking for, they finally asked for a visit from a United Church of God minister.

Adan Langarica and his family visited Navajoa, Sonora, to meet the Calderon family Dec. 25 to 30. Mr. Langarica and his family first drove to Tepic Nayarit where we have a small congregation, and from there drove again for about 12 hours nonstop and arrived in Navajoa, Sonora. He was a little worried because it was about Christmas time and he did not know how he would handle the situation if they had a Christmas tree or offered him some unclean food to eat. (They had invited him to eat with them on the Sabbath.) He was uncertain as to how much of the truth they understood.

Mr. Langarica wrote the following concerning his visit with them:

"It was very exciting to explain what we saw and heard with this family. On Friday evening the parents and five children were all ready at sundown to start the Sabbath. We all stood and started to recite the Ten Commandments. After that, we all sang some hymns that related to the Sabbath and even sang some of our hymns from the UCG hymnal. I had taken some hymn CDs with me."

From Passover to Baptism

It has been a year now since one of the daughters, Abigail, began to write to us. She asked us about the Passover and told us that they wanted to keep it with us. Mr. Langarica began to explain to them about the Holy Days and other topics concerning the Church, but they would insist again and again on the Passover issue. This issue was the most



The group in Navajoa, Sonora, Mexico

urgent for them, so Mr. Langarica sent them the Passover instructions on how to keep it at home. They later told him that that was what truly filled them with much joy and happiness and had helped them decide to join United.

For months they have been reading booklets and studying our doctrines and have been keeping the feasts and keeping their tithes, including their second tithe, in order to go to the Feast.

Along with this family, another two women from the Church of God (Sev-

enth Day) are also congregating on the Sabbath. One of them has known about the Church since the 1980s and had asked for baptism through the *Plain Truth* magazine. She wanted to be baptized but was told to wait. She got tired of waiting and went to the Church of God (Seventh Day) and was baptized there. She knew about the Sabbath and Holy Days as well as the Leviticus 11 dietary laws. They have been getting together with this Sabbath-keeping family for about one year.

After baptism counseling with Mr. Langarica, it was decided that some of them needed to be rebaptized. Dec. 29, six members of the Calderon family were rebaptized in the ocean about one hour away from Navajoa, Sonora.

This is the good news about the first-fruits from the Mexican Web page. **UN**



United Youth Camps

105 Experience Winter Camp

From Dec. 22 to 26, 68 campers and 37 staff from 14 states journeyed to southern Wisconsin for the eighth year of Winter Camp. According to many comments, this year reflected a very high level of cooperation, respect, enjoyment and development of relationships among the entire camp. Campers say they come to any of the eight United Youth Camps to improve their relationship with God and to get to know other young people who have the same spiritual beliefs as they do. It is an ongoing delight to the staff to see the youth do just that during the camp experience.

One camper wrote that camp "has strengthened my relationship with God and has built my confidence and friendships by being positive all the time. It made me realize that you can have fun learning and living God's way." Another camper wrote, "It's helped me to take my faith more seriously and to develop a better relationship with God, as well as my friends."

As a camp director, I could not have been more pleased with the esprit de corps and cooperation of the campers and staff. It was a joy to see several months' planning come together in such a remarkable way. But as any staff will tell you, no matter how hard they may prepare for their responsibilities at camp, it is God who makes camp what it is.

Without His blessing on every part of camp, we could not have such enjoyable relationships and enjoyable activities.

One longtime kitchen worker at the camp facility we rent gave the campers an extremely nice compliment. She told a staff member that of all the groups she has seen at their facility, she had never seen a nicer group than our campers and staff. This is a real tribute to the parents



of the campers, the campers and staff themselves, and to the entire United Youth Camps program.

Safe and productive activities included floor hockey, capture the flag, speed-away, team challenge, volleyball, basketball, journalism class, dance and

mixer games. The two modesty classes taught by Lisa Fenchel and Steve Myers were a highlight of camp. A new evening activity, which proved to be very popular with the campers, was "flex-time" where campers could choose which activities they wanted to do. The camp dance continues to be very popular and appreciated by campers and staff.

Gary Black, assistant camp director, commented, "I was impressed by the campers' enthusiasm for the whole camp experience, including learning more about God's way of life. Our youth are serious about their fun and their faith. Camp is the perfect place for both. It's wonderful to see our youth able to make new friends and develop relationships within the Church. Lifelong friends are made at camp."

After dorm cleanup, the day's activi-



Campers play floor hockey



Campers and staff gather for an all-Winter Camp photo

ties began with a "Compass Check," which is a 30-minute Christian Living class conducted by one of the staff ministers. The theme of the classes was "Developing Your Relationship With God." Another well-received class was the Q&A session where campers wrote in their questions on a variety of spiritual issues. The ministry answers the questions and leads the campers in discussions on a variety of topics.

United Youth Camps coordinator, Larry Greider, visited camp for several days and helped with the American Camping Association visit (see article in the January issue, page 6).

Two campers wrote about the impact Winter Camp had on them. Camp "has shown me it is possible to give a life that is for God and not for man," said one. "This year camp really made me think about life a lot and how I should have a better life through God," said another.

Winter Camp 2003 is scheduled for Dec. 21 to 25, with staff coming in for meetings the evening of Dec. 20. A brand-new camper dorm has already been reserved for our use.

Many more camp photos can be accessed at www.wintercamp.org.

Steve Nutzman

Rain Helps Build Family Atmosphere in Chile

The 2002 youth camp in Chile took place at Camping Calafquén, situated on the shores of beautiful Lake Calafquén, 500 miles south of the city of Santiago. This was the first time we have had the camp there.

One of the main reasons we had the camp in this place was to make it closer for the youth in that part of Chile to attend. The place is also closer to the youth in Argentina. This location made it possible for 15 youth from the south of Chile and five from Argentina to attend.

Altogether 78 young people from Chile and Argentina attended the camp, with the majority of them coming from the city of Santiago. There were 10 adults helping with the organization of all of the activities for a total attendance of 88 people.

The adventure really began with the trip itself. A bus filled with our youth from Santiago left the night of Dec. 23 headed directly to the camp site. I understand that not one of them slept on the trip. They all were singing and laughing. The morning of that same day some of the adults had left for the camp in order to have the tents ready for everyone when they arrived.

The bus arrived early in the morning on Dec. 24. That same morning the youngsters from the south of Chile

and those from Argentina also arrived.

Just when everybody arrived, it began to rain. In fact, it rained the next two days. At first the adults were worried that the youngsters would get sick or become unhappy because of the rain. However, all of them were so very positive and happy that the rain actually helped all of them to get much closer to each other. They got together to talk in the tents, in the dining hall and in any place there was no rain. When the rain was over, everybody agreed about the positive results. The situation actually helped create a family atmosphere for the rest of the camp.

The next five days of camp were sunny and beautiful. All had a chance to swim and play in the marvelous lake.

During the camp there were several activities: We had a Bible study every day, then we had short speeches given by the campers. Subjects for the speeches were chosen by individual campers. The main subjects of the speeches were about their worries for the future, how the youth of the Church of God can stay away from the wrongs of this society, what the adults can do for the youth to stay in the Church, how to avoid fornication and sin in general, etc.

One of the speeches that impacted all of us was given by a handicapped boy.

His name is Gabriel Castillo. Before he went to the camp he had told his parents he did not want to attend services anymore because he had no friends among the youth. His parents asked if the boy could come to camp even with his limitations. I must say that his attendance at the camp was one of the most inspiring events of the camp. He danced while in his wheelchair. He played soccer and volleyball. He participated in every activity.

He even gave a speech in which he said: "Youth in the world always see the outside of others. That is why nobody wants to be my friend out there. In this camp I have learned that there are other



Campers gather at Lake Calafquén



Youth camp in Chile served 78 young people (photos by Saul Langarica)

youngsters like me who see deeper than the appearance. Fortunately God sees what we have in the mind and in the heart, otherwise I would be lost. Many have legs and do not know how to walk. I cannot walk, but I know where I go." When he finished his speech, several were actually crying. At the end of the camp he received a prize as the most positive and optimistic camper.

We also had educational games every night. The campers all liked playing these games and at the same time learning a lesson about life. In one of the games, the campers were organized by groups in order to picture themselves in the past, present and future. The pictures were all very interesting. In one picture the group members saw themselves in the past as being controlled by their par-

ents. In the present they see themselves as cutting some of the "cords" of control and beginning to walk by themselves in life and in the Church. In the future they see themselves cutting all of the cords and walking totally by themselves to the Kingdom of God.

The main sports activities were soccer, volleyball and swimming. We also had two dances, an impromptu talent show and a sing-along around a fire on the beach. Campers also went on a big boat around beautiful Lake Calafquén.

Meals were prepared by several ladies from the Church. Everybody agreed that the meals were tasty and abundant.

The campers went home from camp Dec. 31. All mentioned that the camp was a great success.

Saul Langarica

Guatemala Youth Camp "Very Edifying"

by Luis Mundo Tello

From Dec. 13 to 19 we had a youth camp in Central America with an attendance of 106 from Guatemala and El Salvador (90 young people and 16 adult staff members).

The camp complex is about 50

kilometers (30 miles) from Guatemala City, Guatemala. We had nice weather and many sports such as soccer, volleyball, races and parlor games.

Every day the youth had Bible studies where they participated actively. We had a bonfire and a talent night where the youth demon-

strated their artistic gifts.

The activities also included some orientation speeches to prepare the youth to combat the social pressures that they encounter in society. Everything was very edifying. **UN**

Right, group photo of the campers and staff at the camp in Guatemala



GN Distribution Program Volunteers Do Good Work

by John LaBissoniere

In 2002, 39 congregations participated in the *Good News* Newsstand Program in the United States. Nineteen individuals also participated in areas where there was no congregational effort. In the 12-month period beginning in January 2001, the overall newsstand circulation grew by an amazing 176 percent—from 24,450 to 68,650 average copies per issue! As 2003 begins, newsstand magazine circulation has climbed to 73,750 copies each issue.

In 2002, members ordered 422 acrylic countertop displays and 81 pedestal displays. Brethren are currently distributing *The Good News* in 486 stores, restaurants, motels and other locations.

Also in 2002, 30 congregations in the United States were involved in the *Good News* Brochure Display Program. Additionally, 21 individuals were active in areas where there was no congregational program established.

In 2002, brethren distributed 21,840 brochures in 296 outlets located in their communities. (See chart below for more information regarding the newsstand and brochure programs from 1999-2002.)

Volunteer Stories

To give you an overview of the activity taking place in some congregations, below are stories and observations from Church members active in the programs. These remarks are characteristic of the experiences of dedicated brethren in many congregations who help make known the wonderful message of God's coming Kingdom.

Our sincerest thanks goes to every volunteer, not only in the United States, but in nations around the world!

From Glenda King, *Good News* newsstand coordinator, Tucson, Arizona, congregation:

• "Estelene Smith is a 77-year-old lady who does not drive, yet she is faith-

ful in walking several blocks to maintain a *Good News* subscription brochure display located in a grocery store.

"Also, Jeannine Armstrong Kasowitz is an elderly lady suffering from cancer and undergoing chemotherapy treatments. Despite health problems, she always remembers to take a few brochures and *Good News* magazines to leave in the waiting room at the doctor's office."

From Randy Crawford, *Good News*

as a contact representative or a magazine stocker, each member can have a part in helping bring a positive change of life and direction to a potential child of God. It is very encouraging to walk into one of my distribution locations to see someone reading a copy of *The Good News!*"

• Comment from distributor Ailsa Braun: "I was surprised to learn that a secretary at the travel agency where I have a *Good News* display actually lives in our neighborhood. She mentioned

is The Shrimp Boat restaurant and another eatery specializes in pork barbecue! The third location is a Salvation Army thrift store. God knows where best to put His knowledge!"

• Comment from distributor Randy Crawford: "I see the zeal and love for God's work in all the brethren involved in the distribution program here in Charlotte. You never quite get over the rush and heart-pounding excitement when you walk into a business to check your display. It is encouraging to know that God's precious truths have made it into a few more hands. One of my displays is located in an ice cream shop. An employee recently told me that she uses information from *The Good News* in youth classes she teaches at a local Baptist church. You never know just where God wants His truth!"

From Darrell Lindsley, *Good News* newsstand coordinator, Salem, Oregon, congregation:

• "Our *Good News* magazine and brochure distribution effort here in Salem and Albany, Oregon, is through free literature displays in eight libraries. Eight Church members are involved, and they are happy to have a part in this important aspect of the work. The Salem library is our best distribution location. Over 100 copies are distributed there each issue and another 100 copies in the other seven locations."

From Tom Meece, *Good News* news-

stand coordinator, San Francisco, California, congregation:

• "Lud Kiramidjian takes care of *Good News* outlets in the financial district of San Francisco. He mentioned how some people rely on the outlets for magazines prior to becoming subscribers. For example, just as Lud was delivering a new issue to an outlet at the San Francisco Transbay Terminal, he came across a reader asking an employee when the new issue would arrive. It seems that the number of subscribers certainly does not equal the number of people actually reading the magazine!"

"Also, Rick Dawson, who takes care of outdoor dispensers near the San Francisco Civic Center, periodically helps me pound out dents, paint and generally refurbish the dispensers. It seems that in addition to providing the *Good News* magazines to the public, we occasionally give a few people an opportunity to take out their frustrations on our displays!"

If You'd Like to Volunteer

These are just some of the encouraging comments and stories we could mention. If you would like to find out more about beginning a newsstand or brochure distribution program in your area, please contact the program manager, John LaBissoniere, at (888) 369-9940 or by E-mail at john_labissoniere@ucg.org. **UN**



The Charlotte, North Carolina, newsstand crew: Sandy Mills, Helen Meek, David Mills, Madalene Taylor, Fred Barton, Martin Braun, Betty Bost, Randy Crawford, Heather Braun, Ailsa Braun (photo by Jim Hudson)

newsstand coordinator, Charlotte, North Carolina, congregation:

• Comment from distributor Fred Barton: "I find it easy to stock my *Good News* displays located where I shop or eat lunch or on the way to the mall. I experience a joyful hope before I see how many magazines have been taken! It was satisfying one time when a woman saw me filling a display and asked for 'her' copy."

• Comment from distributor Betty Bost: "Being a *Good News* distributor means having the privilege of bringing hope and positive change to others. I hope my participation in the program has been a catalyst for others. Whether

how she enjoys seeing our family going for walks. I'm glad we have made a positive impression and in doing so, perhaps have also made a favorable impression of *The Good News* magazine."

• Comment from distributor Martin Braun: "One day, while restocking a *Good News* display at a restaurant, I noticed a person standing nearby. The lady said: 'I'm just waiting on my magazine. I really enjoy reading it.' I was very encouraged to know someone was so enthusiastic about our literature."

• Comment from distributor Helen Meek: "Three of my most active newsstand outlets are at unusual locations, considering our biblical doctrines. One

Unsung Heroine: Merci, Maryse!

"It is my way of giving back," says Maryse Pebworth of San Jose, California, who performs an unsung service on behalf of our French-speaking brethren. She records simultaneous translations of the weekly sermon—English to French—and sends those tapes to France.

French-born Maryse began learning English at age 11, making it a very successful second language. She was so successful with her language skills that she worked for the French Department for eight years and graduated from Ambassador College.

Her duties for the department included secretarial support, proofreading and written translation. Her training in simultaneous translation came about while serving the French ministry who went to Pasadena for the refresher programs. She would translate sermons, classes and presentations. Maryse also provides simultaneous translation at the Feast of Tabernacles.

"At the beginning, doing simultaneous translations felt like running after something you can never really catch. Now it's a lot of fun and I enjoy the challenge." Since good simultaneous translations aren't a word-for-word substitution, Maryse says she prays for inspiration before every message so as not to lose the essence of the points being made in each sermon.

The current translation program began three years ago in support of her family in France. Today, translation tapes are being sent to French-speaking members throughout Europe.

To Maryse, the assignment is, "a kick—kind of like being on stage. I enjoy the spontaneity and the mental challenge." For those being served, all we can say is "Merci, Maryse!"

Fred Crow

Program	Year	Congregations	Individuals	Outlets	Displays	
					Ordered	Number Distributed
Brochure Program	1999	26	0	151	452	24,855
	2000	46	29	435	1,150	42,225
	2001	52	58	639	815	33,700
	2002	33	31	351	313	21,840
Newsstand Program	1999	3	0	71	0	11,700*
	2000	5	0	142	57	18,050*
	2001	9	13	364	762	25,450*
	2002	43	26	761	503	68,650*

*Per issue

"Television," continued from page 1

is our ongoing television broadcasting, being aired on local community cable-access stations through programming produced by two volunteer congregations. These two congregations, on opposite sides of the country, have put together teams of dedicated volunteers who produce the programs from start to finish!

The Portland, Oregon, congregation has been producing a television program for distribution on community-access channels even prior to the inception of United in 1995. The Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation has been putting forth similar efforts since 1996. Both programs have an excellent cost per response from their programming due to the nature of community access television: Airtime is generally free, or very low cost, for residents of a local community who wish to sponsor a television program in their town. On pages 6 and 7 of this issue you will read of the successes of both programs and how you can be involved.

Two Programs Available

The Portland *Tomorrow* program is hosted primarily by Howard Davis, and a team of 20 local congregation volunteers work diligently each week to produce new material. They tackle the script writing, lighting, camera work, sound recording, editing and postproduction. Their unwavering dedication to *Tomor-*

row has to be congratulated after so many years of service.

Beloit's *Good News* television program is now in its seventh year and the quality of production has made many advances in just the past 12 months. Recording and editing is done in the basement of a home owned by an elder and his wife in Rockford, Illinois, where the set, lighting, cameras and editing equipment are housed. This program has a main host each time, who is joined by a "guest" to discuss a biblical topic or to analyze world news and trends in light of Scripture.

The *Good News* format is very similar to Portland's *Tomorrow* program, and the host/guest set-up seems to work very well. It is only on rare occasions that a single presenter does the whole half-hour or hour program. It appears that our audience likes to "eavesdrop" on these "conversations," and when a particularly interesting discussion develops the phone lines start ringing! We have found the same format to work very well for the *Good News* radio program as well.

You Can Be Involved!

Almost every city and town in the United States has one or more community access television stations that provide free or low-cost airtime for local residents. Some of the programming seen on these channels is obviously produced on a very low budget by eager citizens of the community. As a result, the much-higher quality and production val-

ues of United's two television programs stand out as material to be taken seriously—while costing us very little!

At present we are airing our two local congregation-sponsored television programs on only around 50 stations across the country, while around 2,000 are available! All we need is a sponsor in each town to contact his or her local cable access facility to inquire about local airing requirements, sign up and get one of United's programs on the air! Sometimes there are some nominal fees for tape duplication or local sponsor endorsements, but it is usually low cost or absolutely free.

We hope that we can go from the current 50 or so stations to around 250 stations in the coming 18 months or so. This medium is very inexpensive, and the responses are well worth the few dollars spent on duplication and mailing of tapes to the local television stations. Please get involved at this time if you are able!

Long-term Goals in Television

Plans are on the drawing board to eventually have a home-office-produced television program. The experience being gleaned by our current team of volunteers, pastors, presenters and guests will be invaluable in the final formulation of a national television program for the United Church of God. As you know, broadcast television is a much more expensive way to reach people

than the Internet, the printed word or printed advertising. However, now that United has a solid foundation of booklets on key biblical subjects, plus a full-color bimonthly *Good News* and the thought-provoking *World News and Prophecy*, the Church is in a very good position to go to the next step—a professionally produced, weekly television program.

This program would also take advantage of free community-access television stations, but would, in addition, be ready for paid, broadcast airtime. The goal of such a program would be to preach about the soon-coming Kingdom of God and also solicit new *Good News* subscribers who would then be fed an ongoing menu of the truths of God.

There is one barrier in the way of United bringing these plans to fruition, and that is simply cost. We anticipate that preparing a television studio at the home office that includes a modern set, studio lighting, cameras and editing equipment, could be done for around \$125,000. Even this amount is not presently available in the Media and Communications Services budget. We

pray that in the not too distant future some funds will become available.

However, even once a professional television studio is prepared, there is the ongoing weekly cost of airtime. This becomes a significantly higher dollar amount. While we should be able to take advantage of low-cost local community-access television channels, the desire would be to also purchase airtime on broadcast and cable channels that would reach across the country. We would certainly appreciate your prayers as we work diligently to preach the gospel in as many ways as possible—including broadcast television.

In the Meantime...

We pray that funds and resources will soon become available so that United can go an extra step in this regard. In the meantime, we have two good, local television programs produced primarily by volunteers from the Portland and Beloit congregations that are ready for more local involvement! Please consider becoming a local sponsor in your town and contacting one of the men listed below this week! **UN**

Who to Contact

If you would like to sponsor one of the two available programs in your area, please feel free to contact one of the following men:

- For the *Tomorrow* program produced in Portland, Oregon, please contact Howard Davis at howard_davis@ucg.org or by telephone at (503) 760-0973.
- For the *Good News* television program produced in Beloit, Wisconsin, please contact Steve Nutzman at steve_nutzman@ucg.org or by telephone at (608) 758-9228.

After Seven Years, *Tomorrow* Program Set for More Growth

■ What can you do to help with this exciting method of preaching the gospel on television?

by Robert Dick

How do you reach people with God's Word? What format do you use? How do you motivate people to call for further information about beliefs contrary to theirs, from a church they have never heard of? And how do you build an audience that will keep coming back for more?

After seven years of development and more than 10,000 telephone responses, the *Tomorrow* television program is wrestling with these issues with increasing success. Through the work of the ministry and brethren, *Tomorrow* participants have produced and edited over 300 programs.

In 2002 God blessed the effort with more than 2,700 telephone calls and Web requests for literature in the United States, up 80 percent over the previous year's 1,500 calls. While some of the increase can be attributed to newly added stations, the number of calls from existing stations has also increased.

Tomorrow has contributed over 25,000 booklet requests and thousands of *Good News* subscriptions to United's efforts to preach the gospel to the world.



Howard Davis, *Tomorrow* television program moderator, talks with Ralph Levy, Ambassador Bible Center faculty member (photo by Chris Robertson)

The Work of Many

Production and distribution of the *Tomorrow* program is a collaborative effort of dedicated and disciplined member volunteers. *Tomorrow* host Howard Davis is assisted by approximately 20 dedicated Church members in Portland, Oregon. Taping is done at Mt. Hood Community College television studios free of charge and post-production editing, duplication and mailing functions are handled from rented facilities in Portland.

Additional volunteers in local congregations throughout the United States are responsible for distributing the program in markets from Boston, Charlotte and Austin to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle.

The television program's reach is further assisted by the *Tomorrow* Web site, designed and maintained by professional Web master Chip Chuprinko. Due to the power of the Web, viewers generate additional literature requests from all over the world—Europe,

Africa, the Middle East and Asia. *Tomorrow* can be viewed at www.Tomorrow-ucg.org.

Tomorrow's Structure and Format

According to Howard Davis, program host and moderator, "The structure and format of the program is a key to the successful connection with our growing audience." The one-hour program is divided into six segments of seven to eight minutes with breaks for commercials featuring the Church's literature.

The program bears a deliberate resemblance to the nationally aired PBS *Charlie Rose Show*, after which it is modeled. The set provides a dignified, contemporary feel, distancing the program from the world of television evangelism. Thought-provoking topics, cut up into bite-size segments with commercials for related booklets and the *Good News* magazine, give the program its appeal.

From its inception, the program has been interactive, with a moderator and one or two guests discussing topics of biblical and prophetic interest. Originally *Tomorrow* featured pastors from the Northwest exclusively as program guests. While they still serve as the backbone of the program, *Tomorrow* has also drawn upon the expertise of pastors and instructors from around the nation.

In addition to the ministry in the Northwest, the program has featured pastors from every region of the Unit-

ed States. *Tomorrow's* guest pastors include Paul Suckling (Boston, Massachusetts), David Treybig (St. Petersburg, Florida), John Elliott (Phoenix, Arizona), Ralph Levy (ABC), Melvin Rhodes (Lansing, Michigan), Donald Ward (Ruston, Louisiana), Bill Jacobs (Albuquerque, New Mexico), Bill Bradford (Oakland, California, and now Australia), Darris McNeely (Indianapolis, Indiana), Robin Webber (Los Angeles, California), Victor Kubik (Lafayette, Indiana), Robert Fahey (Chicago, Illinois) and Roy Holladay (UCGIA president).

Inspiring Audience Responses

Response is what it is all about. Inspiring comments continue to come in as viewers respond to *Tomorrow* programs. Some examples in the last two months are typical: "I am new to religion. Your program is wonderful!"—Vancouver, Washington. "I appreciate the booklets I have received, looking forward to more!"—Denver, Colorado.

A pastor in Salome, Arizona, said, "I really enjoyed the program on 'America in Prophecy.'" Several from around the United States made comments like this one about the Halloween program called "Holiday for Satan": "I really didn't think there was a devil, but your program convinced me. Please send the literature." One lady put her enthusiastic request simply: "Thank you, thank you, thank you,

thank you. Send the literature"—Charlotte, North Carolina.

Some callers indicate they are seriously searching for God, and the program offers them personal answers. "I am looking for the real Jesus. The one taught by the churches is fake!" said one man. Another said, "I have had a bad year full of problems, guilt and financial issues. I turn on the TV and find free material dealing with my problems. Thank you so much." Yet another said: "I don't believe we are supposed to celebrate Halloween and the other Christian holidays. Glad I found someone who agrees and teaches that. Send me the literature on the Holy Days."

Where to From Here?

At the beginning of United, the

Tomorrow program was a regional program, cablecast exclusively in the Northwest. With the approval of the Council of Elders in 1998, the program was allowed to be distributed in any church areas in the United States that requested it. Since that time *Tomorrow* has spread to New England, the Atlantic seaboard, the South, Midwest and West.

In early 2002 *Tomorrow* was required to create an oversight review team of ministers around the country for review of television scripts for the one-hour program in order to further expand.

In August 2002, UCG President Roy Holladay and Media Committee Chairman Vic Kubik visited Portland for a review of the program, meeting with the 20 volunteer staff who pro-

duce the program under Mr. Davis' direction.

"*Tomorrow* has demonstrated consistent growth in both quality and results in all areas of content, production and post-production," Mr. Holladay said. "Its sustained depth of volunteer personnel has demonstrated an excellent blend of local participation and national home office direction. It fits with the United Church of God meld of membership and ministry doing God's work together."

Would You Like to Help?

From its original program distribution to cable-access stations in and around Portland, *Tomorrow* has spread to 40 cable company locations across the country. This is in reality only the tip of the cable-access iceberg, which is



Roy Holladay appears on a *Tomorrow* television program

Tomorrow program on their cable system. It simply requires someone to sign up to become a local sponsor and meet the cable access facility's airing requirements. You do not even have to be a subscriber to the cable system to be a sponsor, as long as you live within the cable franchise area.

made up of thousands of companies operating in the United States.

In many communities members and ministers are able to sponsor the

All expenses for tapes, duplication and mailing will be paid. Anyone interested in sponsoring the *Tomorrow* program on their cable-access station can contact Howard Davis at howard_davis@ucg.org or by telephone at (503) 760-0973 for further details. UN

Cable Television Could Certainly Use More Good News

Volunteers in Beloit produce the *Good News* television program, which other volunteers arrange to air free in their local areas.

by Steve Nutzman



Media operation manager Peter Eddington gives advice to Galen Morrison, *Good News* television video editor

The *Good News* television cable-access program began in 1996, soon after United began. From the outset we have coordinated our efforts through the Council of Elders and the Media and Communications Services department. After some reorganization, programs once again began to be produced in late 1998 after receiving approval from the Media Committee of the Council.

So far, 43 half-hour programs have been produced. The Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation has paid for the majority of costs associated with the program from its local evangelism fund.

In October of 2002, we asked for the assistance of Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services operation manager, in producing the half-hour

The on-air presenters are Darris McNeely, Melvin Rhodes, Steve Myers, Gary Petty and Jerold Aust. During taping, one man serves as a host and the other man as the guest. The host asks questions of the guest and the viewer, in a sense, "listens" in on their conversation. The presenters desire to present the truths of God directly from the Bible but in a conversational tone. A natural give-and-take banter develops between the two presenters during the programs.

The programs are divided into three segments and a one-minute *Good News* magazine ad follows each segment. The toll-free number is mentioned throughout the program so viewers may call in to request free literature. All programs highlight a particular booklet from the UCG booklet inventory.

Many callers have expressed appreciation for seeing the program on their local station and some have asked for a local minister to contact them. The toll-free number is answered by voice mail and the literature requests are forwarded to the home office for processing.

Viewers are also encouraged to log on to the *Good News* television Web site to order literature or to view programs at: www.goodnewstelevision.org. From the beginning, the goal of the *Good News* television program has been to work with the home office in preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God via cable-access television. Most cable-access stations do not charge for airing programs and many air the programs several times a week at various times.

Our dedicated crew of 12, made up of United members from the Beloit congregation and one member from a

United congregation in Chicago, have been trained at a cable-access station in various duties. These include camera

news and current events. We feel this gives a good balance and mix of subjects for the viewing audience. Some of



Steve Myers and Gary Petty tape a *Good News* television program

work, sound editing, lighting, directing, editing, Web page design, tape distribution and other aspects of television production.

Before each taping, we ask God to bless and inspire our efforts and to use the programs in preaching the gospel to the local communities. It has been a humbling experience for everyone involved because of the challenges that are involved in television production.

About a third of the programs deal with Christian living, a third with prophecy and a third deal with world

our program outlines actually come directly from UCG booklets or the *Good News* magazine.

The *Good News* program is currently shown in seven states on 12 stations. The tapes are dubbed by a UCG member in southern California. Once the tapes are sent back to us, we send them to the local sponsors, UCG members or pastors, who have requested the tapes. The sponsors deliver the tapes to their local cable-access station and once they have been aired a number of times, they are returned so they can be shipped to another station. We suggest repeating the programs because this allows our efforts to be more efficient and stations generally don't mind repeating programs from time to time. UN

Making the Most of Good News Distribution and Cable Access TV

In June 2001 we began distribution of the *Good News* magazine on newsstand pedestal displays in five supermarkets in our LaFollette, Tennessee, community. After nearly 14,000 copies were picked up over a 19-month period, we began to think that due to the name recognition of *The Good News*, the Church's cable-access television program might be a superb follow-up.

After conducting some preliminary research with the local station, we obtained wholehearted endorsement to proceed on the project from our pastor, David Dobson. We then contacted Steve Nutzman and Galen Morrison of the Beloit-produced *Good News* television program. They responded enthusiastically and rapid-

ly and within days we were able to hand deliver the first two videotaped programs to WLAF-TV in LaFollette.

The first program, entitled "Will Christ Return?," aired on Sunday, Jan. 11, at 11:30 a.m. It was an excellent, timely and attention-grabbing program, especially in the current atmosphere of potential war with Iraq. Although it takes time to build a television audience, we were very excited and pleased to be informed that responses are being recorded by Beloit's toll-free voice mail center. Our Knoxville, Tennessee, congregation, of which the LaFollette community is a part, will be praying that many more people will choose to tune in and respond.

John and Linda LaBissoniere



Darris McNeely appears on the *Good News* TV program

Encouraging Cable TV Listenership

After arranging to air the *Good News* television program on our local cable-access station, we wanted to do something to encourage people in the community to tune in.

Prior to distribution of the January/February 2003 *Good News* magazine on the supermarket newsstand displays, we placed labels on the front covers of all the copies. The labels

read: "Watch the *Good News* Television Program on WLAF-TV LaFollette, Channel 12, Sundays, 11:30 a.m."

We thought this would be a simple, inexpensive and efficient means to help point people to the Church's excellent program and stir up more interest in the wonderful truths of God.

John and Linda LaBissoniere



From the Word

Remember the Sabbath to Keep It Holy: Business Questions

■ Should members of the Church of God own businesses that remain open on the Sabbath?

by Dave Myers

As the sun sinks low in the sky on Friday afternoon and approaches the horizon, the people of God wrap up their daily toil and prepare to honor God by resting on the Sabbath. This Sabbath rest is a time earnestly anticipated by the laboring man and woman, but what about the business owner? Can a Christian employer or business owner keep the business open during holy time by hiring others to work during that time? What are the biblical principles involved in business owners keeping the Sabbath holy? Let's examine several biblical principles regarding Sabbath observance.

The Sabbath Is Holy

In addressing this issue, we must start with the basic Sabbath command. Exodus 20:8-11 states:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work; you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

The first principle stated by God is that this 24-hour period He refers to as the Sabbath should be remembered by humans so that it can be kept holy. This 24-hour period is special—unlike the other six days of the week. In the second half of verse 11 we read that this period of time is *hallowed* (holy). God reveals in the Bible that new days begin at evening or sunset (Genesis 1:5; Joshua 8:29; 2 Chronicles 18:34; Nehemiah 13:19; Mark 1:32). So the time from Friday sunset until Saturday sunset is holy and our responsibility as humans is to remember it in order to keep it holy.

God also reveals that each Sabbath is to be a memorial to the Creator. Keeping the Sabbath holy acknowledges that God is the Creator and Life Giver (Exodus 20:11; 31:17).

Rest, Not Work

God set the example of rest when it came to the Sabbath (Genesis 2:2). Exodus 31:16-17 states:

"Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the

Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed."

God did not carry on His creative work during the Sabbath through the angels (righteous or fallen) but instead set an example of rest and refreshment.

God also reveals that humans are to keep the Sabbath holy by not working on this day—"in it you shall do no work" (Exodus 20:10). God clearly shows that the other six days are for working and laboring. "Six days you shall labor and do all your work" (verse 9). The Sabbath is to be very special—so special that God proclaimed the death penalty upon those Israelites who ignored the command to hallow this day (see Exodus 31:14-16).

Since the Sabbath is holy time, God instructs us that He did not want His people to make others disrespect Him by forcing them to work during the Sabbath. Everything that was under the control of one's household was also to cease from work on the Sabbath—even including slaves and animals! "In it you shall do no work; you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates" (Exodus 20:10).

It is clear that God did not want regular work to go on during the holy time of the Sabbath. He did not want His people to continue regular business through others—even if those workers are currently unconverted. Therefore, He commanded that children, slaves, animals and even foreigners not be compelled to work in our place. "But the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you" (Deuteronomy 5:14, NASB).

In Leviticus 23:3, we are told, "For six days work may be done; but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings" (NASB). The biblical principle seems clear: as much as possible the Sabbath should be a "complete rest" from our normal working or secular activities.

The overriding principle is that we are to show respect and honor toward God by respecting and hallowing the time He set aside as holy. This cessa-

tion from work and respect for holy time was—and continues to be—an example of our respect for God as our Master and Creator.

Avoid Doing Business

Another Sabbath principle is brought out in Nehemiah 13:15-17: "And I warned them about the day on which they were selling provisions . . . Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, 'What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day?'"

Nehemiah was clear in his instructions to shut the city gates and not allow regular business to continue. The Sabbath had become a "market day" in Jerusalem with all sorts of items being bought, sold and bartered. These were not just food items. While we must be careful not to extract too much from this example, there is a business principle here for our day—conducting normal business activities is not acceptable for Christians on the Sabbath. God's people were not to be involved in regular commerce during holy time.

Our Example and the Gospel

If a Christian operates a business on the Sabbath and has others work in his or her place, what is the teaching others about the Sabbath?

In Numbers 15:32-36 we have the example of a man who was discovered working on the Sabbath by gathering sticks. He disrespected holy time and thereby disrespected God by not using the preparation day properly and by not resting on the Sabbath. It was judged that he should be put to death. Would it have been acceptable for this man to hire an unconverted person to pick up his sticks for him on the Sabbath? No. The principle is that God desires His people to rest from their work and for their workers to be able to rest as well.

To hire another person to work on what we know is holy time sends a very confusing message to that person. It conveys, "I rest on this day, but it is not important for you to do so." What gospel are we preaching by our personal example? Are we saying, "The Sabbath is holy for me, but I feel that it is fine for you to break God's law and work as my employee?"

We are told in Isaiah 58:13-14, that on the Sabbath we are not to do our own ways. Certainly that would include our employment and our enterprises. Instead we are asked to devote the Sabbath to God's business and pleasure. Instead of engaging in our own pleasures we are to engage in God's pleasure on the Sabbath. We aren't supposed to even speak our own words on His day because the Sabbath should be the one time of the

week that nothing should hinder us from becoming completely absorbed in God and His Word.

Matthew 5:19 states: "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Can we see that employing others to work while we rest is a confusing contradiction?

On the other hand, what beneficial effect could a proper Sabbath-keeping example have on an employee? On our neighbors? On the community? Wouldn't it be another means to show the significance of the truth of God and how precious this holy time is to us? Not only are we to rest, but those who work for us are to be given the opportunity to rest also. If we own a business, it is not acceptable to have our employees working while we enjoy a restful Sabbath day.

Is an Employee a "Manservant"?

What was a manservant? Was he roughly equivalent to today's employee? A close reading of the Scriptures shows that a manservant was a bond servant or slave who lived in the owner's household. Deuteronomy 16:11 and 14 show that a manservant was taken to the Feast of Pentecost and Feast of Tabernacles to worship as a part of the family. Deuteronomy 12:18 shows that an owner was to take his manservant to the place where God set His name to worship and offer sacrifice (that is, the tabernacle and later the temple).

An employee, therefore, should not be classified as roughly equivalent to a "manservant" since such a servant was a household slave.

Yet, it is clear that God intended that everything under the control of the believer—sons, daughters, servants, slaves and animals—have the opportunity to rest on the Sabbath. This principle clearly extends to employees. They likewise should not be working for a Christian who understands that the time during the Sabbath is holy. We cannot force unbelieving employees to rest on the Sabbath, but we should not hire them to labor for us on that day.

Exceptions to the Rule

Judgment is required in many circumstances because there may be exceptions to the general rule. For example in Matthew 12:5 we read, "Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?" Some work was done on the Sabbath by priests and Levites in order to be able to worship God.

Today this principle is applied in our setting up chairs for Sabbath services, assembling public-address systems, information tables, coffee service, traveling to services, etc. Like the priest's labor of old, this kind of Sabbath labor seems to be a legitimate exception to the rule because it enables us to worship God together in the "holy convocation" He commands.

In Matthew 12:11 we read, "Then He said to them, 'What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?'" Here we see that the need of an animal in distress took precedence over the complete rest of the Sabbath day. The clear principle is that if a genuine emergency occurs, action should be taken to handle that emergency.

Also, in John 7:22-23 we read, "Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?" The Jews had judged that the work that needed to be done to circumcise a male child also took precedence over the complete rest usually observed on the Sabbath, and Christ did not disagree.

In Luke 13:15-16, "The Lord then answered him and said, 'Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?'" Jesus was upset with the Pharisees because of their hypocrisy. While they cared for the routine needs of livestock on the Sabbath so that the animals would not suffer, they refused to permit the healing of this woman on the Sabbath to end her suffering. While the lesson was about people, in passing, Jesus showed that it is acceptable to do the minimal labor to care for the routine needs of livestock on the Sabbath day.

Today, judgments may need to be made regarding dairy farmers, ranchers, physicians, nurses, nursing home operators, home health care workers, and others as to how to observe the Sabbath command in their circumstances. (See the accompanying three letters addressing some of these issues.) Yet we strive to be consistent in our application.

We teach Sabbath observance from the strength of biblical principle, not from exceptions to the rule. The principle is clear—all who are in a Christian's direct control should be given

an opportunity to observe the Sabbath rest.

Recommendations

Therefore, the Church of God teaches that a believer should not hire

employees to work on the Sabbath and Holy Days. It does not set the right example of respecting holy time; it does not teach them the holiness of the Sabbath; and it does not give employees the benefit or option of rest

during holy time. Employees working on the Sabbath place the member business owner in a position of responsibility. Employing others on the Sabbath also brings into question our motivation for owning a business

that is open on the Sabbath. Is it just to make money? Does this lead to other problems?

Therefore, as a Church we recommend that members who own businesses close them on the Sabbath

from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset in order to observe the commanded Sabbath rest. We encourage them to have faith that God will bless them for respecting His holy time and setting the right example for others. **UN**

Letters on Keeping the Sabbath as Ranchers, Caregivers or Business Owners

Below are three letters the Council of Elders approved Dec. 13 to be used by the Personal Correspondence staff in dealing with questions from members on Sabbath observance. Specifically they cover questions about farming and ranching, the medical field and owning businesses that operate on the Sabbath.

These short letters do not give a full picture of the biblical teaching on Sabbath observance, and we encourage members to read our booklet *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest* for a more complete overview of this important subject.

Ranchers and Dairymen and the Sabbath

Dear Member,

You asked about ranchers and dairymen and the observance of the Sabbath. As in all cases dealing with Sabbath observance, we must look to the Scriptures for the applicable principles. The Bible does address the issue of the Sabbath and work.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11).

In this reference, even the cattle one owns are not to work. Of course in the society of that day, animals were the

primary means of doing work since there were no pieces of modern machinery. According to the commandment all work was to cease when the Sabbath began as the sun set on the sixth day.

The Sabbath was never considered a day of fasting and is actually listed among the festivals in Leviticus 23 (of course, the Day of Atonement, a day of fasting, is listed here as well). If we are not required to fast on the Sabbath, neither should our animals be required to fast on the Sabbath. Whatever work would be required to feed and water your animals would be appropriate on the Sabbath, but one should not be using his animals for work on the Sabbath—plowing a field, etc. Christ made reference to this principle in the New Testament.

"The Lord then answered him and said, 'Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it?'" (Luke 13:15).

In the case of dairy cattle, it would not be wrong, applying this principle, to relieve the animals by milking them on the Sabbath. Different dairymen may choose to do differently. Some milk late on Friday and then don't milk again until after the Sabbath on Saturday evening. Others milk on Sabbath morning. The actual practice can be worked out as to what is best in each individual case.

Thank you for your question. We hope this helps.

Caregivers and the Sabbath

Dear Member,

You asked about people working in the medical field who keep the Sabbath.

Sometimes people wonder if these occupations illustrate that the Sabbath cannot be kept in the modern world. Actually, there are many people working in various facets of the medical profession who are Sabbath keepers. They simply schedule their time off to coincide with the Sabbath, just as people in other lines of work do.

Another line of reasoning presented in this regard is that people working in the medical profession are "doing good on the Sabbath" and are therefore exempt from the law. It is certainly right and proper to do good for others on the Sabbath. However, if someone's occupation, his (or her) way of earning a living, is in a medical profession, then he is paid for the work that he does. That is, it is a job, not a charitable contribution.

One type of job about which you asked was "caregivers." If you mean by this people who hire themselves out as practical nurses, then this occupation is covered by the above. If, however, you are referring to people who own a care home, other principles apply. There are certain routine chores that would need to be done on the Sabbath in these homes, just as in a private home. Some examples of routine chores would be meal preparation and clean-up, as well as making beds; however, we recommend that these activities be kept to a minimum.

By comparison, the farmer in ancient Israel would need to feed his livestock on the Sabbaths. He would not, however, plow or plant a field—that is, undertake work that could and should be done on other days of the week.

The two principles that guide us about the Sabbath are that it is a day on

which we congregate with others in God's Church to worship Him, and that it is a day on which we rest from our regular work.

Have you had an opportunity to read our booklet titled *Sunset to Sunset—God's Sabbath Rest*? It examines and explains what the Bible teaches about the Sabbath, as well as how today's Christian can observe it. You can order a copy of this booklet from this office or through our Web site at www.ucg.org.

Business Owners and the Sabbath

Dear Member,

You asked whether it was proper for a Church member who owns a business to hire employees for his business to work on the Sabbath and/or the Holy Days.

God commands us to keep the Sabbath day holy. We are to labor and do all of our work in six days, "but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God" (Exodus 20:10). God instructs us not to work, breaking down His instruction into details: "In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you" (Deuteronomy 5:14). Running a business on the Sabbath, even if you as the owner do not work on that day, creates several problems for a Christian.

In light of God's law, as a business owner we should not employ people to work on the Sabbath and/or the Holy Days. In addition to the reference above in Deuteronomy, Exodus 20:10 gives

instruction to the people of God that neither "you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates" should work on the Sabbath. If one is to be diligent regarding his servants and even strangers, then the same principle could be applied to employees. The issue is one of control. In the case of servants or family members living in the home and under the control of the owner or head of the family, it was expected that they would keep the Sabbath. In the case of a business owned by a Christian, where the Christian has the controlling interest in the business, the same principles would apply. It would be inconsistent to believe in the Sabbath and observe the Sabbath, but keep a business that you own open on the Sabbath. This is certainly not being a light to the world (Matthew 5:14). If you believe that the Sabbath is truly a holy day, then you should not open a business you own on the Sabbath.

Due to your ownership and your position as an employer, you would be the responsible party in a business that operates seven days a week and therefore on the Sabbath and Holy Days. Since it is the view of the Church that this would be a violation of God's law, a Christian should not be involved in such business ventures unless he is willing to close on the Sabbath and Holy Days. We realize that ownership may not give absolute control in all situations. If you have any questions, we would advise you to seek further clarification before making a decision to buy or sell a business of this nature.

Work Worries and Woes: What Can You Do in an Uncertain Job Market?

■ How can you increase your job security and decrease your money worries?

by Robert Berendt

The events of 9/11 have sharply focused our attention on the fragility of the world economy and the way that events can change the course of history. The incredible pace of new technology has already changed life more than we can imagine. The world has always changed, but perhaps never as quickly as it is now. On the other hand, we are also far better equipped to function within the changes—if we understand that

changes will come, accept them and "learn to swim."

Don't Worry

Matthew 6:25 gives us some good advice. It may seem hard to follow, but it is valuable advice. Simply stated—don't worry. Worrying causes anxieties. It causes stress, which has a direct effect on our performance. It hampers us from doing our best in any given situation. That does not mean we should not be concerned and be prepared for changes, but it does mean we must not allow ourselves to fume and fuss until we become miserable and depressed. We can take our cares to God in prayer and leave them there as we put our hands and hearts to the task of solving problems.

Luke 14:28 advises us to "count the cost" before we start to build, so as to be sure we can complete our projects. That, too, is good advice because many problems and anxieties arise when people have stretched their budgets far too tightly. If we live in such a way that the slightest interruption to our income will plunge us into desperate straits, then we are not living wisely. Proverbs 30:25-26 advises us to go to the ants and rock badgers for examples of preparation and action. Financial advisers will tell you to stay out of debt if you possibly can and pay your credit cards off each month.

Changing World of Work

Years ago, there was a much greater stability to companies and industries.

Much has changed and, where loyalty and service was of high value in the past, the quick-moving technology and changing business concepts seem to demand a new approach. Companies are scrambling to keep afloat in this changing world, and employees, too, are caught up in the melee. We now are affected by whatever goes on all over the world. That which seemed so certain a few decades ago has suddenly become uncertain.

There are some sound actions that an employee can take to ensure job stability. There are actions that can be taken to become more employable. The key is to continue to understand the times we live in and to be willing to make the needed changes. For God's people that should be easy, because we have all

learned to make huge changes in our lives. We are growing in grace and knowledge spiritually, and that principle of continued growth works just as well physically. Standing still and not moving will ensure that one is left in the dust. We need to get on the train and stay on it.

Tips to Increase Your Job Security

The *Wall Street Journal* printed an article by Joann S. Lublin in December that gave some good advice. It is not new advice, but it is sound. The job market does not need to be volatile to make this advice worthwhile—it makes good sense at any time. In this

See "Worries," page 10

"Worries," continued from page 9

article, I will use the points given in the *Wall Street Journal* (altered a bit) and add a few thoughts.

- Struggle to get yourself into a solvent financial position so that you are not threatened by every change of the "wind." You may need to save money and tighten your belt to do that. We are bombarded with ads telling us how much we deserve a vacation in some exotic place, a new car, a new house or new furniture. Credit cards can make our financial controls difficult to handle. Fight the temptation to overspend.

- Avoid anger, paralysis and panic. Ecclesiastes 10:20 advises us not to curse the king or say negative things because a "bird" may take your words to the boss. Fear and anxiety can lead to comments that make an employee expendable. "Jittery employees often quit at the first sign of an upcoming lay-off. That may be a mistake," warns Linda R. Dominguez.

- Put time and effort into concentrating on the important tasks that will show you can adapt and are a valuable employee. Be sure your work is on time and well done. I just read about a young man who was hired as a security guard, but also made it his personal work to

pick up litter that was lying around. Someone in charge saw this action and he was promoted. He now holds a very important job with the firm.

- Examine yourself to see if you are wasting time or effort in your job. Talking too much with others and taking extended coffee breaks are noticed by bosses who are concerned about efficiency. Take a good look at your dress and working habits—can you



improve? Psalm 26:2 reveals David's request for God to examine him and test him. David wanted to know where he could improve. Paul tells us to examine ourselves (1 Corinthians 11:28). The principles that apply spiritually also work physically.

- Explore alternative career paths. This may seem like a contradiction to

working hard for a company, but the advice when taken properly is a sign of a person who is thinking. Hope and plans for the future are vital to performance. Further education and training could make you more valuable in your present career or job, and it can open new doors for you when you are ready. Some people start a whole new career when they retire. They start to do something they have long wanted to do. Some are very successful financially and in terms of contentment and inner peace.

The *Wall Street Journal* article says, "Plot out a contingency plan." Some may think a person who does this already has a foot outside the door and is disloyal. That is emotional and faulty thinking. Mental health is enhanced by hopes and dreams of a future we want.

- Intensify your networking efforts. "Get involved with your professional organization right now—before you get laid off," suggests Lara Nolen from Dallas. In the past some Church members have shied away from involvement with professional organizations. Though our involvement may be a little limited, we ought to be part of what

is going on. We need to know people and have contacts all over.

- Maintain a positive attitude. "Kick up your exercise program a little bit," recommends Marilyn Moats Kennedy from Wilmette, Illinois. Paul gives this advice when he tells Timothy that bodily exercise profits a little (1 Timothy 4:8). Remember that Paul wrote in the days when people walked everywhere. This advice is even more profitable in our day. We probably sit more than any generation before us. We need to get our bodies in motion.

Paul also advised his beloved Philippians to meditate and think positive thoughts (Philippians 4:8). This is not burying one's head in the sand, but it is maintaining a positive frame of mind that allows us to react with precision, accuracy and strength in all situations of life. A positive-minded person is invaluable in any workplace.

Many humans moan and moan when things go wrong in life. They become helpless in the face of a crisis when action is needed. It really has to do with our frame of mind. We have a strong will that God placed in each of us—we only need to use that and the mind He gave us.

None of these points will guarantee that your job and career will always be

there for you. Changes will come in many areas of life and we all need to change along with what our society and industries demand.

Focusing first and foremost on the Kingdom of God keeps us all in a positive frame of mind and that is one great blessing God gives to us all—the promise of Jesus' return and peace and abundance on earth for all. That will also be a time of good and healthy progress and change.

What a wonderful blessing we have in the understanding God has given to us all. Our hope is anchored on the sure word of His promises. Habakkuk 3:17-19 voices the thoughts of God's people down through the ages. Our hope is not in the physical things of this earth only—it is mainly on Jesus Christ our elder brother and Savior. Habakkuk says:

"Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills." UN

The Scarlet Cord: Echoes of Passover

■ What can Christians learn from the faith of Rahab as we prepare for the Passover?

by Graemme Marshall

It was early spring when the two men set out on a dangerous assignment. It was a secret mission involving a hike of two or three days. They were to ford a river, cross into enemy country and spy out military information. They were nearly captured and had to be lowered down a city wall to escape.

A token left behind of a "scarlet cord" became rich symbolism for Christians ever after. The color red would be powerfully significant in salvation. It holds special significance for New Testament Christians at Passover.

The men were spies Joshua sent to search the land, especially Jericho (Joshua 2:1). They apparently had no fear of mixing with the locals as they entered the city. Possibly their dress and speech wasn't too much out of place. When they walked the streets, they may have browsed for a while before seeking somewhere to stay the night. They ended up at Rahab's "inn" for lodging.

The story tells, however, they were nonetheless observed and identified as Israelite spies. Perhaps their dialect gave them away. Maybe others listening close by might have observed Rahab's animated conversation with them after she deduced they were Israelites. The king sought their arrest by sending Rahab instruction to deliver them up. It's strange he didn't send armed troops. He seems to have expected her to do it. Perhaps this suggests Rahab was of some

influence and standing in the city.

A Chance Meeting?

Now emerges a remarkable turn of events. In this "chance" meeting the spies discover Rahab knows much about Israel. She is, in a way, "counting the cost" of leaving her polytheistic background. And we deduce her family members are similarly agreed in her newfound belief. Could God have led the spies directly to her, as He did Peter to the gentile centurion Cornelius? Did God intend to call her to the faith? We can't say for sure from the account, but we can read how her faith is commended twice, in Hebrews 11:30-31 and James 2:25.

Rahab with her fledgling faith is more concerned about saving the spies than about telling a misleading story to the king. By her subterfuge the king's troops are misdirected to the fords of Jordan. Rahab instead hides the Israelites under drying bundles of flax on the roof. After deceiving the troops, she makes a remarkable confession to the spies. In Joshua 2:8-11 Rahab recounts her newfound faith.

"I know that the LORD has given this land to you," she says (verse 8, New International Version throughout). This is a belief in the power of the true God.

"A great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you." This offers some of the military intelligence the spies are to report back to Joshua. It shows God's hand already at work to bring the overthrow of Jericho.

"We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings

of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed." This was a remarkable statement. The defeat of the two kings was a fairly recent happening across the other side of Jordan. But the Red Sea event was some 40 years previous. How old was Rahab? When did she learn this? Did it come from her parents when she was a child? It shows significant awe of biblical events had spread through the wanderings and shows how neighboring nations were familiar with Israelite history.

The defeat of the two kings suddenly brought everything into sharp focus for a city across the Jordan next on the list. Rahab believes God is with the Israelites, and she is now converting to Israel's God. Also remarkable is how her parents, brothers and sisters all seem equally believing. We see this because the spies tell her all must remain in the house and not leave. It appears they obeyed. Their belief is in sharp contrast to Lot's family members who just mocked the angelic warning (Genesis 19:14). Here they are saved through Rahab.

She acknowledges, "The LORD your God is God" (verse 11). The spies now had to trust her to not tell the king of their escape until they were safe to cross the Jordan and had reported to Joshua.

The Scarlet Cord

Now the remarkable illustration of the scarlet cord.

In return for their safety, the spies vowed to protect Rahab when the Israelite assault began, provided she abided by two conditions. One, she and all hers must stay inside her house during the attack. Two, she must tie a piece

of red cord to her window to identify the location to attacking troops.

Where the scarlet cord came from isn't revealed. It may have been in Rahab's house or with the flax bundles. But we might wonder whether the spies had it with them to tie their clothes, backpacks or sleeping gear. We also can ponder whether God intended the event to become a symbolism for all time.

She lowers them down from her window on the wall after they first establish that in order to be protected she must tie the scarlet cord in the window. This way her house would be identified to an Israelite search party (verses 18-19).

The two spies no doubt excitedly explained all these events to Joshua who in response accepted the vow to protect Rahab and her family. As the Israelites approached Jericho, God explained He would collapse the walls (Joshua 6). Joshua must have wondered how the vow would be honored when the walls fell. Did it mean ALL the walls, or enough of the wall structure to enable the troops to rush in and take the city? It implies all the walls. It must have been astonishing when the dust settled to see the section of wall where the red cord was tied to a window still stood upright. What an amazing deliverance! What a lesson of trust and faith, not just for Rahab and her family, but also for Joshua and the Israelites. (Yet how short-lived was the awe from this miracle for Achan as we see in Joshua 7. But that's another story.)

Joshua immediately told the spies to take Rahab and her family outside the Israelite camp (they were gentiles). Then they burned the city. The biblical directive means it must have also included the standing wall of Rahab's

house. Millennia of erosion means there is little evidence among the archaeological sites at Jericho to enhance this miraculous event.

The Blood of the Lamb

Now let's consider why Christians are impressed with the scarlet cord in the window. It forces itself upon us in the light of scriptural teaching about the blood of Christ. Red blood from slain lambs that was splashed over the doorposts of Israelite homes in Egypt protected them from the slayer of the first-born (Exodus 12:13). The scarlet cord seems to symbolize in type Rahab's acceptance of the "lamb's blood" in her life.

What the blood on the doorposts on the first Passover night in Egypt was to the houses of Israel, the scarlet cord in the window was to the house of Rahab. It became Rahab's identification as one to be saved in a day of calamity. It was the acting out of her faith. Her sinful years overlooked (Acts 17:30-31), she became the ancestress, as did Ruth, of David and of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1, 5-6).

What the blood of the first Passover did for the Israelites may be compared to the use of the scarlet cord by Rahab. What Christ's poured-out blood on the stake did for mankind's sins, the red wine symbol each Passover similarly renews for believers.

Christians celebrate deliverance from the bondage of sin. Despite human weakness, God views "cleansed" believers as "unleavened" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

With that confidence we march on, as did the Israelites, towards the Promised Land. UN

Treasure Digest

“A Lot We Can Learn” From Butterflies!

Butterflies have more flight-control capability than the most advanced fighter jet, said zoologist Adrian Thomas. They have “brains as small as the head of a pin, but there’s still a lot we can learn from them,” he said.

Adrian Thomas and Robert Srygley’s study was printed in the scientific journal *Nature*, and was covered in the Dec. 23, 2002, *U.S. News and World Report*, which said the researchers videotaped red admiral butterflies in a wind tunnel. The butterflies were using “every aerodynamic mechanism we had previously thought of, and two more besides,” said Adrian Thomas.

For example, the butterflies were doing “a sort of double-time flap that sets up a pair of tiny tornadoes above each wing, generating up to 3 Gs of acceleration.” *U.S. News* reported.

These small wonders are another example of the awesome design of our great Creator!



What Is Gnosticism?

Q. I am a new member and have heard (not sure of the spelling) Nausticism, Naustic, mentioned in a couple of sermons in a negative way, and am embarrassed to admit I have no idea what it is.

A. Thank you for your E-mail with your question from some of the sermons you have heard.

I believe the concept you are asking about is “Gnosticism” or the “Gnostic” school of thought. Please don’t be embarrassed to ask! The word is not in common use these days, and so it is not particularly unexpected that you have not run across it.

The name comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, which means “knowledge.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* defines it as “primarily a seeking to know, an enquiry, investigation” (page 348).

Unfortunately, the Gnostic school of thought went far beyond the simple definition of the word. The New International Version Study Bible says that Gnosticism was “one of the most dangerous heresies of the first two centuries of the church” (page 1,906, Introduction to 1 John, article “Gnosticism”). That is most certainly true.

Its core teaching could be described as what we call “dualism”—in this case, the teaching that spirit is entirely good and matter is entirely evil. From this idea, Gnostics concluded several things, chief among them the idea that man’s body, since it is matter, is evil (contrast this to Genesis, where God said that everything He made was “very good”).

They also claimed that salvation was attained by escaping the body through special knowledge (hence the term “Gnosticism”), which included worship of angels (this is undoubtedly what Paul referred to in Colossians 2:18-23). They denied that Christ had actually come in the flesh (since they believed all matter was evil, they thought the Son of God couldn’t have really been a human being)—a claim that would mean we have no Savior, since He gave His life to pay for our sins.

One form of Gnosticism held that the body was to be treated harshly (since it was matter, and there-

fore evil)—contrast that to Paul’s exhortation to glorify God in our bodies, since the body is the temple of God’s Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Gnostics of this particular “brand” were ascetic, reclusive and lived like hermits. Another form of Gnosticism, in a strange twist of reasoning, held that since it was matter that was evil or sinful (not the breaking of God’s law—1 John 3:4), it didn’t matter what a person did in the flesh because only the spirit was important! These types of Gnostics led wild, licentious, unrestrained lives. What a mess!

Hopefully this gives a little context to the messages you have heard, and the references to this particular heresy that Paul, John and other of the early apostles had to battle against. This subject is also addressed in a couple of our booklets: *Sunset to Sunset—God’s Sabbath Rest* page 42 and *God’s Holy Day Plan* page 60. If you need free copies of these booklets, just let us know, or you can find them in the literature library of our Web site at www.ucg.org/articles/booklets.

Douglas Johnson

If Only...

If only I fully, completely believed that God is, and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6), I wouldn’t be so focused on this material world and troubled by doubts.

If only I truly loved God with all my heart and mind and soul, and loved my neighbor as myself (Matthew 22:37-40), how could any relationship problems exist?

If only I more deeply loved the law of God (Psalm 119:97-98) and really understood it is for my good (Deuteronomy 10:12-13), then I would be more diligent in keeping it and reflecting God’s heart and mind.

If only I fully understood the magnitude of sin, its terrible penalties and the awesome sacrifice Christ and the Father made (John 3:16; Hebrews 12:2; Genesis 22:9-12), how could I be tempted by sin’s fleeting pleasures (Hebrews 11:25)?

But as I strive to more deeply understand and internalize these truths through study, prayer and meditation, I can’t just wish “if only . . .” I must continue to fight those downward thoughts and pulls through the strength Christ provides through the Holy Spirit (Philippians 4:13). Then when I see Him as He is, I will be like Him (1 John 3:2-3). If only that day will come soon (Revelation 22:20)!

A Parent’s Perspective on the Prodigal Son

The parable of the “prodigal son” in Luke 15:11-32 has been a favorite of many throughout the years, and it is no wonder. It speaks of hope when a person goes astray.

The son was like many young people throughout the ages. He had to learn the hard way. In this case he came to himself when “reality hit.”

The parable doesn’t mention how strong the bonds were between the young man and his father before he decided to leave.

If the bonds were strong, then it would have made it easier for the son to come back and confess that he was wrong. He would not have feared that his father would condemn him or humiliate him. He would have known that his father would not hold it against him for years to come or rub his nose in it.

What if his father had been harsh and condemning? It would have been much harder for him to come back, knowing that he would be facing a lecture about how the father had told him so.

As parents we like to think that it could never happen to us, that our kids could never go astray. Somehow life doesn’t always work that way.

What we need to do before that possibility arises is to build the bonds of love with our young children. They need to know that we love them no matter what. They must know that we will always be there for them. They must know that they can always come to us and that we will receive them with open arms.

As many parents of prodigals will testify, the bonds of love can be even stronger when a young person realizes that he made some mistakes and wants to turn his life around. It can be very rewarding and joyful on both sides when a young person does change. Both can learn from each other and the benefits can be carried down to the grandchildren.

Marilyn Braley

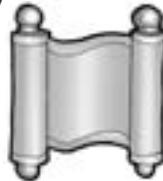


How the Bible Was Preserved

Sidney Collett shared the following information about the careful and accurate preservation of the Scriptures in his book, *All About the Bible* (pages 14-17):

“In making copies of Hebrew manuscripts which are the precious heritage of the Church today, the Jewish scribes exercised the greatest possible care, even to the point of superstition—counting, not only the words, but every letter, noting how many times each particular letter occurred, and destroying at once the sheet on which a mistake was detected, in their anxiety to avoid the introduction of the least error into the sacred Scriptures which they prized so highly and held in such reverent awe. Moreover, each new copy had to be made from an approved manuscript, written with a special kind of ink, upon sheets made from the skin of a ‘clean’ animal. The writers also had to pronounce aloud each word before writing it, and on no account was a single word to be written from memory.”

Dr. Collett concludes the section, “And yet in all those voluminous sacred documents, which have been copied times out of number, the highest authorities assure us that, in regard to the New Testament, the variations of any importance introduced by copyists amount to less than one-thousandth of the entire text; while the Hebrew documents of the Old Testament show even less variation still!”



Why We Don’t Describe Ourselves as “Born Again”

The Council of Elders approved a study paper on “Born Again” at their meeting in December, and the paper was sent to all UCG elders in January. It is now also posted on the Web site at www.ucg.org/papers, or you can ask a UCG elder in your area for a copy. Here are excerpts from the “Preface”:

“The paper reinforces Herbert W. Armstrong’s use of the analogy of begettal at baptism and *birth when one actually enters the Kingdom of God*. The explanation of John 3 will show that indeed when one is truly born of the Spirit, he will be a spirit being. We were born of the flesh and are therefore, flesh. John 3 has a duality that should not be denied. This chapter also discusses *conversion as a type of birth*, but this does not deny the concept of the analogy that Mr. Armstrong taught us for so many years—indeed the paper emphasizes the truth of that analogy.

“The difference in this paper is the additional understanding of the Greek word *gemmao*. We believe that one should not take the position that this word can only refer to conception. *Gemmao* is a much broader term and refers to the whole process of conception and birth. We should be teaching this broader concept of the Greek word. “Salvation is a two-step process—beginning with conversion (which is both a one-time event and an ongoing process) and ending with entrance into the Kingdom. The analogy of conception for conversion and birth for entrance into the Kingdom is certainly valid for explaining the process of salvation. We are not ‘saved now’ nor are we ‘born again’ as the concepts are explained in the evangelical world.

“We do not believe the term ‘born again’ is a proper translation from the Greek and, therefore, should not be used to refer to a Christian. But it is true that as Christians we must be transformed once we repent of our sins, accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and become baptized (Romans 12:2). This is truly a new life as well. The biblical analogy of children and babes is just as valid as the conception and birth analogy. This is the essence of the study paper—these items are analogies to help us understand the process of salvation.

“It was concluded by the Doctrine Committee and the Council of Elders that this paper does not constitute a change in the doctrine of salvation but a deeper understanding of the analogies and the Greek words used in the New Testament to describe the process of salvation.”

What Is Leavening?

During the Days of Unleavened Bread we are to have no leaven or leavened products in our home (Exodus 12:15; 13:7). This includes any agent that produces fermentation and causes dough to rise—yeast, baking powder, baking soda, potassium bicarbonate and sodium bicarbonate are ingredients to look for on labels. Items such as bread, cake, crackers, cookies and prepared cereals and pies that contain leavening must be put out. Doing this is symbolic of putting both the visible and hidden sins out of our lives.

Homemade cream puffs, angel food cake, popovers and sponge cake, while light and fluffy, need not contain any of the above ingredients. Most pie crust recipes (except for graham cracker crusts) are unleavened. However, these products, when purchased from stores or bakeries, frequently do include leavening. Check the ingredient list.

Pita bread, flour tortillas and graham crackers, while flat, contain leavening. Even some brands of matzos marked “kosher for Passover” can list baking soda or baking powder in the ingredients!

Brewer’s yeast, yeast extract (a flavoring) and cream of tartar (a dry acid) are not leavening agents.



PUPTATL?

God’s festival season is about to begin again with Passover beginning at sundown April 15. The seven festivals can be remembered with the acronym PUPTATL: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles and Last Great Day.

The plan of salvation as revealed in the Holy Scriptures is pictured in the meaning of these seven annual festivals.

Why not take the time now, at the beginning of the festival season, to review the meanings of these important days? You can find this outlined in the *Fundamental Beliefs* booklet, *What Is Your Destiny?*, *God’s Holy Day Plan* and lesson 12 of the *Bible Study Course*.

How Should Christians Celebrate the Passover?

■ Most professing Christians see the Passover as an aspect of the Old Covenant that is unnecessary for New Covenant Christians. But Jesus instituted a new administration of the Passover service for His followers that has deep meaning for us today.

By Gary Petty

Every year, towards the end of Abib 14 of the Hebrew calendar, many in the Jewish community gather for the Passover *seder*. This special meal includes a shank of lamb, herbs, wine and an egg. A place is set for Elijah and during the ceremony children formally ask why this night is observed.

Passover customs at the time of Christ included formal temple ceremonies as well as a meal. The "Last Supper" recorded in the three Synoptic Gospels is a Passover celebration. But Christ's practices on that night opened a whole new dimension for Christians.

God's Covenant With Abraham

Understanding the history and theology of the Passover begins with God's dealings with Abraham. Genesis 15 records God's recommitment to an earlier covenant promising Abram that his descendants would be numerous and prosperous (Genesis 12:1-4). In Genesis 15:2-3 Abram reminds God that because he has no natural heir, the promises remain unfulfilled. God then instructs Abram to present animals suited for sacrifice.

The unusual rituals found in Genesis 15 are not explained in the Bible but are found in ancient Middle Eastern covenant rites. The *Kiel & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament* states: "The transaction itself was not a real sacrifice, since there was neither sprinkling of blood nor offering upon an altar, and no mention is made of the pieces being burned. The proceeding corresponded rather to the custom, prevalent in many ancient nations, of slaughtering animals when concluding a covenant, and after dividing them into pieces, of laying the pieces opposite to one another, that the persons making the covenant might pass between them" (Vol. 1, 1996, pages 136-137).

God, as the initiator of the covenant, is represented by the "smoking oven" and "burning torch" of Abram's vision. (Fire and smoke are common manifestations of God's presence.) It is interesting that Abram didn't pass between the cut animals as was customary in a covenant between equals but was incapacitated. The covenant ultimately includes a promise of the land of Canaan (Genesis 15:18-21).

Genesis 15:13-14 contains a prophecy concerning Abram's descendants spanning over four centuries: "Then He said to Abram, 'Know certainly that

your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions."

The rest of the book of Genesis details the lives of Isaac (including the near sacrifice of Isaac with its foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice—Genesis 22), Jacob and Joseph and how Abraham's descendants migrated to Egypt. The book of Exodus begins hundreds of years later when Israel is enslaved just as God predicted.

The Exodus Passover

The 400-year prophecy of Genesis 15 is fulfilled during the life of Moses as Israel's deliverer, making the Passover of the Exodus a prophesied event of the Abrahamic covenant. Exodus chapters 1 through 11 outline God's judgment on Egypt leading to the 10th plague of killing the firstborn. In Exodus 12 God institutes the Passover sacrifice:

- Verses 1-6: A lamb, without blemish, to be selected on the 10th day of Abib and held until the 14th when it is to be killed.

- Verse 7: The blood of the lamb to be spread on the doorposts of the houses.

- Verses 8-9: The Israelites are to roast the lamb.

- Verses 10-11: The Israelites are to eat it with sandals on their feet and staff in hands.

- Verses 12-14: This is to be a memorial of when God passed over them in Egypt.

- Verse 21: The lamb itself is called the Passover.

- Verses 22-28: The Israelites trusted God and obeyed Him.

Instructions in Exodus 12:43-49 specify that the Passover could only be eaten in households where the males were circumcised. No one could participate in the Passover without entering into God's covenant and accepting the sign of that covenant.

Since the Sinai covenant, or what is often called the Old Covenant, hadn't yet been instituted, the reference here is to the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 17:21-27). To be a participant in the Egyptian Passover, a person had to be a participant of the Abrahamic covenant. The death angel "passed over" those who placed the lamb's blood on their doorposts, and the Israelites left Egypt for the Promised Land as God had prophesied.

The Deuteronomy Passover

Months later, as Israel camped before Mount Sinai, God instituted a new covenant with them that was an extension and fulfillment of promises made under the Abrahamic covenant. The Sinai covenant eventually involved a formalized priesthood and tabernacle, which necessitated some changes in the Passover administration as recorded in Deuteronomy 16:1-7:

- Verses 1-4: These instructions encompass the sacrifices of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (notice verse 2 mentions both flocks and herds

or cattle, while cattle were not to be slain as the Passover), but also seem to specifically deal with changes in the administration of the Passover.

- Verses 5-7: Under the Deuteronomy administration the Passover lamb was to be slain at a central place, which later became Jerusalem, the site of the temple.

The Torah also emphasizes that events of Abib 14, specifically the killing of the Passover, are distinct from events of Abib 15 (Leviticus 23:4-8; Numbers 28:16-17).

Jesus Institutes a New Covenant

Biblical scholars debate on whether the "Last Supper" was a traditional *seder*. The Gospels contain very specific language signifying that these events were in fact, if not a *seder*, a Passover meal. Notice Luke's account in Luke 22:7-23:

- Verse 7: The Passover was to be killed on Abib 14. Jesus' instructions are on the 13th because the next day was the 14th. Since biblical days begin at sunset, the meal and ceremonies that night would be after sundown and occur on the 14th.

- Verse 8-13: The wording here is definite in declaring that Jesus and the disciples are participating in a Passover service.

- Verses 14-16: Jesus says that He has desired to eat this Passover with His disciples before His "suffering." Jesus clearly calls this meal with His disciples a Passover.

- Verses 17-23: Jesus now institutes a new Passover observance. The administrative elements of the Passover were to take on a new meaning because a new covenant was being established.

The New Covenant Passover

It is important to notice the profound administrative differences in the Exodus, Deuteronomy and New Covenant Passovers.

The Exodus Passover entailed a slaying of a lamb on the 14th of Abib so that the death angel would pass over the Israelites. The Deuteronomy Passover entailed sacrificing lambs as a memorial of the Exodus Passover. In Israel's history it was also seen as a means of sanctification. Hezekiah's Passover included sprinkling the lamb's blood on those present (2 Chronicles 30:15-17). The New Covenant Passover entails the reality of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God (1 Corinthians 5:7).

The Exodus and Deuteronomy Passovers entailed eating a meal including a lamb. The New Covenant Passover entails eating bread and drinking wine as symbols of Christ as the Lamb of God. With the reality of Christ fulfilling the Passover sacrifice, it was necessary to change the symbols of the Passover service. It was no longer essential to sacrifice a lamb as a type of a future event.

On the night before He died, Jesus instituted bread and wine as symbols of His body and blood. Neither the Exodus nor Deuteronomy Passovers contain any

instructions about drinking wine. The Jewish *seder* contains wine, but the *seder* is a Jewish tradition, not a scriptural injunction. Notice Paul's instructions to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 11:17-26:

- Verses 17-22: Paul instructs the Corinthian church not to have a meal during this communal ceremony.

- Verses 23-25: Paul instructs the Church to follow Christ's example of taking the bread and wine on the same night He was betrayed.

The Exodus Passover involved the painting of the lamb's blood on the doorposts. The Deuteronomy Passover involved the sacrificial blood of a lamb. The New Covenant Passover involves its participants being "washed" in the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:4-6).

The Exodus and Deuteronomy Passovers contain no instructions for foot-washing. The New Covenant Passover contains instructions for foot-washing (John 13:1-17).

The Exodus and Deuteronomy Passovers entailed sacrificing lambs as a memorial of the Egyptian deliverance. The New Covenant Passover is a memorial to Christ's deliverance of Christians from the slavery of sin (Romans 6).

Participation in the Exodus and Deuteronomy Passovers was limited to families whose males were physically circumcised. The New Covenant Passover is only for those who have been spiritually circumcised symbolized by baptism (Romans 2:28-29; Colossians 2:11-12).

The Exodus and Deuteronomy Passovers involved the quick killing of the lamb. The New Covenant Passover involves the suffering of the Lamb of God (Isaiah 52:13-53:12; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7). Christ's sacrifice was more than the act of a Roman soldier stabbing Him around 3 in the afternoon of Abib 14. It included all the events that began the night before.

Typology of the Passover

Many of the types of the Exodus or Deuteronomy Passovers are celebrated in the reality of the New Covenant Passover.

The Exodus or Deuteronomy slaying of a lamb were types of Christ's sacrifice. Israel's leaving of Egypt is a type of the Christian leaving spiritual Egypt. Christians should gather on the anniversary of the night before Christ's sacrifice, not as a type of Israel's experience, but as a celebration of the profound reality of Christ's sacrifice and their deliverance from spiritual bondage.

It is important for Christians not to base their Passover observance on the Exodus or Deuteronomy administrations, but to follow Christ's instructions as the Passover Lamb and High Priest of a better covenant.

Controversy in the Early Church

Eusebius (A.D. 263-339) gives us a glimpse into the early church in *The History of the Church*. He records that in the early second century a bishop from Asia Minor named Polycarp confronted the

bishop of Rome over the issue of observing the Passover on Abib 14 instead of celebrating Easter. Polycarp claimed to have been a disciple of the apostle John and taught that the Passover was the true observance of the apostles.

In the latter half of the second century the Passover controversy became critical and divided the churches in Asia Minor from those who observed Easter in the West. The Passover contingent, known as Quartodecimans, were led by Polycrates. In a letter to the bishop in Rome, Polycrates wrote, "We for our part keep the day scrupulously, without addition or subtraction. For in Asia great luminaries sleep who shall rise again on the day of the Lord's advent, when He is coming in glory from heaven and shall search out all the saints... All of these kept the fourteenth day of the month as the beginning of the Paschal festival, in accordance with the Gospel, not deviating in the least but following the rule of the Faith" (*The History of the Church*, Eusebius, pages 230-231).

In the resulting conflict the churches in Asia Minor who observed the Passover on Abib 14 in accordance with the Gospel accounts were excommunicated by the bishop of Rome.

Henry Chadwick sums up the dilemma in *The Early Church*: "It was impossible in so weighty a practical question for diversity to be allowed, but there can be little doubt that the Quartodecimans were right in thinking that they had preserved the most ancient and apostolic custom. They had become heretics simply by being behind the times" (1985, page 85).

The Exodus, Deuteronomy and New Covenant Passovers all reflect God working out His plan of salvation. Each administration involves different ways of celebrating both the temporary realities of the people of those times and the future reality when Jesus Christ would become the Passover and administer the New Covenant as the High Priest of God.

Christ leaves a clear example of how the New Covenant Passover is to be observed. As Paul wrote, "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

On the night He was betrayed, Christians are to gather together to conduct a foot-washing ceremony and take bread and wine as symbols of His sacrifice. Christians are to celebrate this special occasion as a reminder of Christ's sacrifice, our present relationship with God through the resurrected Christ and the future establishment of Christ's priesthood at His return. **UN**

The General Conference of Elders: Just Another Meeting, or Meeting Responsibilities?

■ Here's a personal note of encouragement to ministers and members alike regarding the upcoming General Conference of Elders meeting. We're all in this together!

By Robin Webber

Section 7.1 of the Bylaws of the United Church of God, an International Association, simply states: "A general conference meeting shall be held annually at such time and place as the Council may determine, with appropriate notice given to all elders enrolled in the corporate record."

At face value, I've got to admit that just reading the previous sentence sounds pretty dry and, well, "corporate." But I would like to take a few minutes of your time to offer some life and breath to Article 7.1. Why? Because the dedicated work of this legislated body of elders has far-reaching implications in molding the daily church life of all of us brethren; and towards shaping and molding a spiritually rich church environment for our future membership.

As we go back just a brief span of years, I think you will find it fascinating to understand the importance of the annual meeting of the General Conference of Elders (GCE).

But first, just what is the responsibility of the GCE? The Constitution offers a powerfully definitive answer as we break into the thoughts of Section 3.2.2.3, which says, "God has established the office of elder to provide care and oversight to the congregations. Thus, the General Conference of Elders is responsible to God to ensure that His people are served and their needs attended to."

What an awesome responsibility to be personally accountable before God concerning the general welfare of His people! To serve God, and to serve His people, is simply profound in its fullest ramifications. It is also incredibly humbling to the men who serve in this role.

Lest We Forget

But how did this all begin? If we don't "start at the beginning," we can simply run out of steam because we lack the will and drive to maintain something very special. As God's Word clearly reminds us in Proverbs 29:18 (King James Version), "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

In early 1995, a number of ministers and members had come to a common conclusion that they were no longer free to worship or teach in a manner they felt was "God-breathed." God would have to provide a new way.

Ministers and members, arm in arm, prayer in prayer and heart in heart, sought God's will as to what to do.

Together, as God's saints, we fasted and prayed that God would show what we might do, if anything. At last, the answer became apparent: A group of elders would gather together in Indianapolis, Indiana. There we would beseech God as to whether we might continue in a collective and unified effort to serve Him, preach the gospel and care for His faithful servants—the brethren who were being cast out of their congregations for believing the Word of God.

Many of you brethren encouraged your ministers to go on your behalf and seek God's answer. Some elders paid their own way, others were sent by their congregations in the spirit of Acts 15:2-3, which recounts, "Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church . . ."

As in the book of Acts, a bond of joint purpose was sown between members and ministry that had never before been present to this degree. We all truly needed God and one another.

Seeking God's Will

Upon arrival, we all truly felt thrust into the atmosphere of the book of Acts. There was no human leader or distinguishable organization. But there was a keen and humble desire to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ wherever He would lead. We had to simply take on faith and establish the practice expounded in Hebrews 3:1: "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus."

In seeking God's will, we came to more fully understand and embrace the admonition of Proverbs 11:14: "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." In seeking God's will, we established the practice of balloting to determine the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was not a vote to determine simple majority, but rather a tangible means by which a body of believers could establish the clear intent of the Holy Spirit's guidance.

We talked a lot. We listened a lot. We all prayed a lot, in fact, more than ever in our public meetings. We knew we couldn't do this alone. We also knew our brethren, who we represented, were praying and fasting back home. Prayer is the glue that sticks people together to serve God's purpose, not theirs. Christ had promised in John 14:18, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." The early Church took Christ at His word, and at Indianapolis, in a dark hour, we claimed that same promise in solidifying prayer.

So many lessons were learned and new determinations were made. We came to a new bond of working and loving unity between salaried elders,

non-salaried elders and faithful brethren. We came to a burgeoning awakening that we needed to respect the workings of God's Holy Spirit in every Christian and validate each one's involvement in the work of God.

We came to understand the importance of "consensus." This term denotes more than the final numbers supporting a ballot, but a Spirit-led approach towards accepting results that we feel the Holy Spirit has led the General Conference of Elders to accept. Does that mean we will agree with every decision? No, it doesn't. And sometimes, humanly, that's tough. You know it, and I know it. But, as members of the GCE, we must be sincerely dedicated to the principle of supporting the decision of the whole for the sake of a unified and harmonious effort.

The annual General Conference gives ministry and members alike a yearly crash course in experiencing the joy defined in Philippians 2:2-3: "Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of

mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

Are we any less in need of God's immediate guidance and direction than in 1995? Sure, we have a home office building and an established Ambassador Bible Center and an increasingly growing multimedia presentation of God's message to this world. But even as we have coalesced and strengthened as an organization, the challenges over the horizon—and, yes, those in plain view—loom ever larger.

Why I Attend

So why do I, as one member of the General Conference of Elders, contin-

uing to be the active and living trust of the General Conference of Elders as stated in Section 2.2.2.3.

An Investment of Time and Money

I realize this takes time and money on the part of our elders and their families. The question is, can you see the great value of it? I realize many of our elders faithfully come every year, and others strive to come as often as they can. The purpose of my letter is to encourage you to recognize that this is not simply a meeting, but an opportunity to meet our responsibilities.

Brethren, I encourage you to encourage your elders to go on your behalf, just as biblically demonstrated in the book of Acts. Ask them! Tell them of your desires to be represented. It doesn't come cheaply for some, especially for those living at a distance. Many of our pastors, elders and their wives have paid "year in and year out" from their own funds, and willingly so, for you—the brethren.

What Is in Store for this Year's Conference?

This year's conference is for the first time being guided by the input placed before the Council of Elders by a task force composed of salaried and non-salaried elders. The specific goal has been to create an environment of learning and bonding that will draw elders and their wives to Cincinnati for the events of May 3, 4 and 5.

The approved theme is "Maximizing Your Ministry." Many ideas have been discussed for bringing everyone together in warm and constructive fellowship. Plans include providing a time and place to allow the General Conference to directly discuss issues with the Council of Elders. We hope to have a memorial session honoring those men and women who have died over the past eight years in the service of their God, His abiding truth and their brethren.

Beyond this, in response to the input of fellow conference members, the goal is to have a variety of dynamic workshop sessions (some possibly leading towards on-site certification) that will be practical in nature to the very real needs confronting us on a daily basis.

Psalms 133:1 refreshes the reader with the godly insight, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Unity is not an event, but an action and a series of actions taken one step at a time. If we take unity for granted, we can take it for granted that we will not have unity for long.

Over the course of these meetings going back to Indianapolis on, I have never ceased to be amazed how these meetings "tie the knot of unity." As the General Conference of Elders 2003 approaches, let me conclude by asking both our ministry and members a simple question, for each of us has our role. Is this just a meeting, or is this about meeting our responsibilities? **UN**



General Conference of Elders meetings provide both stimulating education and unifying fellowship

mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

Challenges Ahead, Looming Larger Than Ever

That first meeting in Indianapolis was not the "end-all" of all conferences. It was simply the beginning of the rest of the story of our maturing growth as a people set apart by God to fulfill our part in His plan of "Preaching the Gospel and Preparing a People." Much of what was experienced in Indianapolis was codified in documents and ratified at the first official General Conference of Elders meeting in Cincinnati in 1995.

God was extremely merciful and generous to us in those first few years as we processed our way through our hurts, wounds and hopes. He ultimately galvanized us once again to "preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples." That mission statement con-

ue to attend this yearly gathering? I recognize that a picture is worth a thousand words. Seeing the conference in person and hearing about the conference are two different things. Touring the home office and meeting the fresh faces of our ABC students, or just reading about it, are two different things.

Sometimes in the course of the year our passions and personal hopes for our Church can seem to outweigh our need to "esteem others better than ourselves." When the elders come to the General Conference and meet one another and just talk to one another (rather than about one another), we realize we have much more in common than we have in differences.

I go to the General Conference to maintain old friendships and make new ones. I go to "network" in the hallways, sharing ideas and learning from others' new ways of doing things. I go to show support for the work of the Church and its leaders, even when I have questions and concerns. I go to make sure I am serving God and at the same time repre-



Local Church Updates

Cape Town Says Farewell to Resident Elder

On Sunday Dec. 8, 2002, members of the UCG Cape Town, South Africa, congregation enjoyed a meal and fellowship at the home of members Stan and Barbara Botha.

The occasion was a farewell to Peter and Sonja Hawkins who have transferred to England. Peter had been the resident elder in Cape Town for the past six years.

The function included a farewell gift presentation in which a music CD featuring favorite pieces of the individual congregation members was presented to the couple. Peter and Sonja were asked to identify each member's choice. Great fun was had with this event, which was appropriately dubbed "know your congregation."

Although farewells are never pleasant, everyone had a good time and the day was especially blessed by the baptism of new member Victor Langdown. Peter and Sonja will be sadly missed, but our prayers and best wishes go with them.

Stan Botha

Fargo Hosts Senior Appreciation Brunch

On Sabbath, Dec. 21, 2002, the congregation in Fargo, North Dakota, honored its senior members with a special brunch prior to church services. Featured on the brunch menu were steaming hot egg bake dishes, hash browns, beef bacon, fresh fruit, an assortment of homemade muffins, whole-wheat waffles, orange juice, hot cider and coffee.

The teens helped serve beverages to the seniors during the meal. A ladies



Ladies chorus sang "The Battle Hymn of Aging" at Fargo's senior member appreciation brunch (photo by Paul Roush)

chorus sang "The Battle Hymn of Aging."

Paul Luecke, pastor of the Bismarck, Rugby and Fargo, North Dakota, as well as Winnipeg, Manitoba, congregations, thanked all the senior members for their loyalty to God's truth and their dedication to His Church and to the congregation. Afterwards, the younger children presented each senior with a rose. Everyone enjoyed the event so much that it

was suggested to have a potluck brunch in springtime.

Karen Halvorsen

About 1,800 Attend Winter Family Tournament in Lexington

Dec. 25 to 28 the Cincinnati North, Ohio, and Lexington, Kentucky, congregations sponsored the sixth annual Winter Family Tournament. Because the activity outgrew its home in Cincinnati, it was moved from Kings Island Resort in Cincinnati to the Marriott Hotel in Lexington; however the weather and the relocation did not stop approximately 1,800 people from coming. They came from all over the United States and as far away as Canada, Mexico and France.

Why do people travel so far, take time off from work and pay travel and other expenses to come to this activity? Jim O'Brien, tournament coordinator and pastor of the two churches, said, "I've



Sabbath services Dec. 28 at the Winter Family Tournament in Lexington, Kentucky, with approximately 1,800 in attendance (photo by Peter Eddington)

asked myself the same question several times. Members of the Church have a deep desire to connect with each other. This activity provides a rare opportunity for a large number of members to make that connection. We've looked for ways to provide something for every age level of the Church, from athletics to education. To attract the entire family we needed to provide something for every member of the family."

Mr. O'Brien said, "We want to treat members as customers, asking them for suggestions on ways we can better meet their needs." However the most important aspect of the tournament is the Sabbath activities. "We built the tournament around the Sabbath. What is unique to us is not basketball or volleyball, but our faith in God." He went on to say that "the Winter Family Tournament offers fellowship with people from a variety of fellowships. Many people call this event a mini-Feast."

The activities kicked off with games Wednesday and Thursday. The traditional pizza party and "get acquainted" dance took place Thursday evening, along with a pool party for the families.

The weekend offered basketball, soccer, volleyball, flag football, ice-skating, swimming, Ping-Pong, a tour of Shaker Town, dances for all ages, congresses for youth, adults and teens, along with 14 seminars. Activities were provided for all ages from tiny tots to singles in the middle.

Sabbath services began with President Roy Holladay welcoming everyone and expressing appreciation to all those who worked so hard to make this family activity possible. He invited all to visit the home office and said that most of the home office staff were at the activity to serve those attending. Clyde Kilough, Council chairman, gave the sermon. He was so impressed with the activity, he said he is planning to return next year.

How does such an activity happen? It's a labor of love for a lot of people. Both members and ministers work shoulder-to-shoulder to create a harmonious environment. A case in point was the Friday night adult congress. Wendy Pack, from Virginia, commented about the opportunity she had to be a small group facilitator along with Roy Holla-

year? It is the service and sacrifice of many people to make this once-a-year activity work—people sharing a common faith, coming together to worship God, having fun, working and serving one another. It is sacrificing by all involved so that the weekend will be one remembered and one that people will want to come back to year after year. The activities are just a bonus.

Janet Treadway

Austin Music Fest a Great Success

The Austin, Texas, congregation hosted Music Fest on Jan. 18, 2003, after the Sabbath service and a potluck meal. Participating were about 28 very talented musicians—instrumentalists and a few vocalists—from around Texas. Everyone was thoroughly entertained by the great variety of music.

Musicians usually prefer to play their instruments when they can join in with other instrumentalists. With congregations small and Church of God members scattered, it has been difficult to get together with other instrumentalists and vocalists.

So our Austin congregation advertised Music Fest in surrounding United congregations with a flier that invited: "Church members who are musicians and their families." The "musician friends" could be in any church or no church. One benefit of Music Fest was the opportunity to interact with the many who came who are not members of United.

The Sabbath service began with the Austin instrumental ensemble accompanying the hymns. Then there were seven inspiring special music selections by different musicians.

The evening began with ongoing jam sessions in the various rooms of the church hall. The music included sacred, country, blue grass and pop. One man brought the most unusual instruments: bagpipes and an African skin drum.

At 7:30 everyone assembled in the main auditorium to hear each individual or group perform at least one number for the enjoyment of the whole audience. This turned out to be an awesome talent show that continued until 9:45. Some of the musicians are professional. In fact, some other professional musicians who wanted to come already had a gig scheduled for that evening.

It was a feel-good evening—with great fellowship, satisfaction and excitement. The main purpose of Music Fest was for the enjoyment of the musicians rather than the audience, and the musicians claimed they had a marvelous time. They met up with old musician friends, made new friends, made music together and played and sang to an extremely appreciative audience. God blessed the day and evening.

Many of the musicians insisted that we continue to host Music Fest, not just annually, but twice a year. We are considering doing that.

Don Hooser

Tampa Bay Hosts Campout

From Jan. 24 to 26, members of the Tampa Bay congregations (St. Petersburg and Tampa, Florida) hosted a family campout at Camp Brorerein, a Boy Scout Camp in Odessa, Florida. Throughout the weekend, local members and guests from nearby congregations had exclusive use of the 80-acre campground featuring a lake, canoes and trails under massive live oak trees.

Unusually cool weather for the area (around 30 degrees Fahrenheit at night and 60 during the day), made the campfires and fireplace in the lodge popular places for fellowship. With the aid of portable heaters, the main lodge was a toasty 70 degrees on Sabbath morning



Tampa Bay members enjoy campfire (photo by Becky Fisher)

when 116 brethren gathered for services.

Because of the rustic camp environment, dress for this Sabbath was outdoor casual. Using this style of dress and the outdoors as a springboard for his sermon, David Treybig asked, "How and where does one find God?"

He explained how some people feel closer to God in the outdoors while others think He is found in great cathedrals, churches or chapels. Covering scriptures showing that Noah, Abraham and ancient Israel all lived in tents (yet had mixed results in terms of truly finding God) and that there was first a tabernacle (tent) for God, later a temple and then a spiritual temple, Mr. Treybig concluded that God isn't found in only one special location. God is always available to those who seek Him with all their heart.

Following the service, members enjoyed a potluck meal and then, later in the afternoon, seminars on "How to Be a Christian Man" and "How to Be a Christian Woman." The seminar for the men and boys featured three speakers, Dave Noel, Jack Fike and Braden Veller, who covered the subjects of ethics, career and sexual morality. The seminar for the ladies was moderated by Teddi Treybig, wife of David Treybig, who coordinated small group discussions on selected scriptures dealing with older women teaching the younger, women's hair length and Proverbs.

Saturday evening featured a barn dance during which Ted Japeth, a member of the Orlando, Florida, congregation, taught everyone basic square dance steps. After breakfast Sunday morning, a scavenger hunt was conducted.

Activities concluded in time for our football fans to watch our Tampa Bay Buccaneers win the Super Bowl.

David Treybig

Announcements

Births



Isabella Marie McCable

Christina and David McCable II of Houston, Texas, feel very blessed to announce the birth of their lovely daughter, Isabella Marie. She was born on July 3, 2002, weighing 5 pounds 5 ounces and was 17 3/4 inches long. Big brother David III is very happy and proud of his new sister.

Isabella is the second grandchild of proud grandparents John and Delia Mulvey of Katy, Texas, and the 10th grandchild of David and Mary McCable of the Houston South congregation.

Mark and Judy Kratz of Harleysville,



Tyler Hamilton Kratz

Pennsylvania, are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, Tyler Hamilton, on Sept. 12, 2002. Tyler weighed 8 pounds 3 ounces and was 22 inches long.

Tyler's proud grandparents are John and Helene Howard of New Brunswick, Canada, and John and Ruth Kratz of Lansdale, Pennsylvania.

Shawn and Beth Cortelyou are happy to announce the birth of their daughter, Heather Anne, on Oct. 3, 2002. She was 8 pounds 10 ounces and 21 inches



Heather Anne Cortelyou

long. Big sisters Megan, age 4, and Emma, age 2, are thrilled to have a baby sister.

Grandparents are Larry and Terri Cortelyou of La Harpe, Illinois, and Ed and Patti Corbitt of Knoxville, Tennessee.

Weddings

Dr. and Mrs. Anthony J. Pacelli, of West Lafayette, Indiana, are happy to announce the marriage of their daughter, Tina Rose Pacelli to Charles Joseph Williams, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charleston R. Williams, of Smyrna, Tennessee. The wedding took place in West Lafayette on Aug. 4, 2002, in a ceremony performed by David Holla-



Tina and CJ Williams

day, elder in the Bellevue, Washington, congregation. The new couple lives in Redmond, Washington, where they attend the Bellevue congregation.

Anniversaries

On Nov. 2, 2002, Vernon Hargrove and his wife, DeLee, were given a surprise reception in cele-



DeLee and Vernon Hargrove

bration of 40 years of marriage. Their Munster, Indiana, congregation presented them with an anniversary plate and bottle of wine. Afterward everyone enjoyed cake and assorted desserts.

God sends us special people who make our lives seem brighter. That's how the congregation describes our friends, the Hargroves.

Obituaries

Goldie Mellerup, 66, a long-time member of God's Church, died on Jan. 18, 2003, at her home. She was born on Nov. 18, 1936, in Dunlap, Iowa. Goldie and her husband, Dale, were married in 1957, both having previously been baptized that same year. The Mellerups had three children, Randy, Delvin and Connie, and



Goldie Mellerup

five grandchildren. Goldie was well-known for her hospitality and concern for children who needed help. She will be greatly missed by Dale, her family and God's Church.

Jeanne Fraley, 69, died Dec. 29, 2002, surrounded by her loving family. She had complications from a

heart valve replacement and bypass surgery. Jeanne was baptized in 1962. She devotedly served the congregations of Corning, New York, and Fort Worth, Texas, as a deaconess for many years. Jeanne, her husband Ed of 37 years, and their daughters Diana and Joanna were a constant source of love and sacrifice to each other and the Church.

Jeanne's self-sacrifice was evident with her love, smile and warmth to every person she met. She was a wonderful and faithful wife and mother. She made all feel a part of her family. Jeanne was blessed to have her first grandchild, Katie, born just a few weeks before her operation. Katie is the daughter of Diana and David Shaw. Her other daughter Joanna and husband Jay Meyer are expecting their first child, a boy, in February.

Jeanne always looked toward God's Kingdom and prayed for its soon coming. It is encouraging to know that in the life to come, Jeanne will get the chance to know her grandchildren. Longtime friend and pastor, Britton M. Taylor, conducted the memorial service.

George W. Johnson Jr., 77, of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, died Nov. 20, 2002, from heart failure.

Mr. Johnson was a veteran of World War II, serving in Europe and the Pacific. After his service in the Army he worked for Beechcraft selling airplanes. He became their number one salesman and won numerous awards. He attended for many years in Greensboro and was a member of United.

He is survived by his wife, Evelene; two daughters, Morgan Gainer of Charlotte and Shannon Masters of Winston-Salem; one son, George W. Johnson III, of Kernersville, North Carolina; five grandchildren; two brothers and three sisters.

Letters

Correction

Adrienne Johnson was incorrectly identified as the Web master of the ucgrace.org Web site on page 5 of the January issue. She is the Web master of the New York City congregation Web site, and Candye Williams is the Web master of the ucgrace.org site.

Warm Welcome

Greetings again! I'd like you to know that since our last correspondence, I've attended Sabbath services three times consecutively! What a warm and wonderful group of people at the Dallas congregation!

After my first attendance, I cried all the way home, I was so filled with real joy. I came straight home, got down on my knees and thanked God so much for the opportunity just to be a part this church.

These loving, gracious people made me feel so very welcome and I imme-

diately knew that this is where I belonged, this is where I wanted to be. I feel even more strongly that I want to learn and do what God commands.

Texas

Believes the Entire Bible

I am writing to thank you so much for all the literature I have received from you and to find out more about a group of believers close to me that I can join.

I have been studying now for several years trying to find a church or group that believed the entire Bible. I met with many different people, attended several churches and even tried starting a home church group in hope of discovering those who embraced the beliefs I had come to recognize from reading and studying my Bible.

When I began to receive your literature, my burden was lightened and my heart gladdened as I discovered,

booklet by booklet and lesson by lesson, that your group did indeed believe the entire Bible. I had begun to wonder if I was misunderstanding what I believed. I had found groups that believe most or parts of what I believed, but every one of them had some skewed or pagan parts to their beliefs, or they had "interpreted" biblical instruction incorrectly, or they based their beliefs on the "visions" of a person. It has been a long and often depressing search, and at times I despaired of finding a group of true believers. My relief at finding your organization has been immense.

Mississippi

Truth About Xmas

We cannot thank you enough for your bold exposure on the truth about Xmas. Years ago we became grieved about certain aspects of the holiday and never knew why until some people

challenged us to look into it ourselves. A trip to a dusty library revealed the truth and ruined Xmas for the librarian who had come along on the journey with us.

At this time of year our family comes up against offense and persecution from family, friends and mostly other Christians who cannot possibly understand why we would not celebrate "Jesus' birth." Most recently we started attending a Baptist Church and have really been struggling with the Xmas thing, so your article could not have come at a better time to edify and encourage us.

As a family counselor, I see the effects of children being lied to by parents. When parents teach Dec. 25 as an actual event, children believe this lie and I wonder how many children grow up and reject God or anything else they are told by parents unconsciously because of being lied to.

Your article will certainly be making its rounds in our life and city, as it is the most concise well-written exposé that we have ever come across. Praise to you again for your boldness to print the truth about this socially acceptable guise of the enemy to keep people from honoring God as they should instead of a man-made shrine of silver and gold.

PS—We see your magazine in many places like the college and different offices. So many people are being exposed to the truth!

Saskatchewan

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

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

effort. There are plenty of people with talents that can help the work, and with God's blessings, the Church will move forward."

Currently the five executive members of the national council are: Bryan Ellams (chairman), David Fenney, Peter Hawkins (CEO), Gerhard Marx and David Payne. There were no changes to the three non-executive members of the council, who are: Brian Greaves, David McDermott and Jan Schroeder.

British Isles Reports Circulation

At the end of 2002, the total circulation of *The Good News* handled by the British Isles stands at 2,543, compared with 1,996 at the end of 2001. This is a 27 percent increase. Of this total, 1,725 are in the United Kingdom, 163 in Sweden and 113 in the Isle of Man, with the remainder distributed in a further 34 countries and territories.

In addition, there are 111 current *Bible Study Course* students; another 671 have already received all 12 lessons.

Philippines Reaches Out With Popular Technology

E-mail and landline phones are too expensive and beyond the reach of most people in the Philippines, but cellular phones have become very popular. Text messaging is especially widely used, leading some to call the Philippines the text-messaging capital of the world.

Riding on this communications trend, the Church in the Philippines has added an easy to remember cell/text number to its contact methods: (+63) 918-904-4444 (the country code for calling from outside the Philippines is 63).

The technology allows text messages to be received directly into the computers in the Philippine office. Answers to questions can be typed on the keyboard and sent from the computer.

Even before the number was printed in our publications, the staff had already received a few messages from people who saw it on the Philippine Web site or heard it mentioned on one of the radio broadcasts in the Philippines.

Ed Macaraeg

Philippine Camp Planned for May

The Philippine youth camp is planned for May 18 to 25, 2003, at the Eden Nature Park Resort, Davao City. An adventure climb to the top of Mt. Apo (10,033 feet) is planned for May 26 to 30.

Since Eden Nature Park Resort is



What's New on the Web?

On www.ucg.org

■ View the latest UCG study papers, including the new paper on "Born Again." <http://www.ucg.org/papers>

■ Check out the redesigned home page. <http://www.ucg.org>

■ See the new sermon transcripts titled "Our Universe and the Sixth Seal" by Peter Eddington, "Is There a Problem Here? Who Caused It?" by Richard Pinelli and "The Way of Cain" by Tom Kirkpatrick. <http://www.ucg.org/deafhh/transcripts.html>

On [vcmagazine.org](http://www.vcmagazine.org)

■ The February *Virtual Christian Magazine* has

about 2,600 feet above sea level, the temperature is mild. Campers are expected to pay a basic tuition fee of P1,000 (\$20) for camp and P1,000 for the adventure climb. Volunteer staff will be provided lodging, meals and local transport expenses.

Volunteer staff and campers (ages 12 to 18) are welcome. Application forms can be downloaded from the Philippine UCG Web site: www.ucg.org.ph. For more information, contact: The Camp Director, United Youth Camp, P.O. Box 81840, DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines; or by E-mail at: ed_macaraeg@ucg.org; or use phone/fax: (+63) 82 241-0150; or use mobile phone/text: (+63) 918-904-4444.

Canada Announces Year- End Statistics

Last year ended on a positive note in many areas of the work in Canada. From April 1, 2002, until the end of the year membership has grown about 3.5 percent. The number of donors has increased nearly 25 percent during the same period. Due to a *Good News* renewal program that began last year, the number of subscribers decreased by about 15 percent. The waiting room program, on the other hand, grew by about 13.5 percent even after our first renewal effort. In all, the Canadian office added 3,864 new names to the files in 2002.

We received exactly 10 percent more mail in 2002 than we did in 2001. We processed a record 7,897 pieces of mail last year versus 7,179 the previous year.

All that incoming mail resulted in an increase in the amount of outgoing mail. We distributed 120,988 pieces of literature last year. In 2001, the total was 113,410. We distributed more *Good News* magazines and *Bible Study Courses* last year than the previous year. The distribution of 17 of our booklets was also higher. The most popular booklets were *Who Is God?*, *What Happens After Death?*, *Is There Really a Devil?*, *Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?* and *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*.

Edwin van Pelt

5.6 Million Card Pack Promotions to Be Sent

For the past three years, the United Church of God has used "card pack" print promotions as an efficient, low-cost means to reach literally millions of potential *Good News* subscribers.

Through this advertising method, our insert cards, which cost less than 2 cents each to print and distribute, are bundled in clear mailing packages along with

articles on "Tomorrow Never Comes," "That's What Friends Do," "Are You Pulling Your Own Hair?" and "Don't Let Familiarity Breed Contempt."

<http://vcmagazine.org>

On [youthmagazine.org](http://www.youthmagazine.org)

■ The January-March *Youth United* has articles on courage, leadership, a new "News for Youth" section, questions and answers and more.

<http://youthmagazine.org>

Other Helpful Links

■ **Youth** and young adult Web 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

promotional materials from other advertisers.

This budget year, card packs are again the foundation of our print advertising efforts. Using the services of five commercial publishers, over 2,950,000 inserts were mailed to individual households between May 2002 and December 2002. An additional 2,650,000 inserts are to be mailed between January and June 2003. As we close out the budget year at the end of June 2003, we expect to have mailed 5,600,000 card pack subscription inserts.

So far this fiscal year, 10,762 people have requested a *Good News* subscription through this inexpensive advertising means. This equals an overall 1.5 percent response at an excellent cost per response of just \$1.99.

John LaBissoniere

Good News Print Run Statistics Announced

The total print run for the January-February issue of *The Good News* was 434,419. This is a net circulation decrease of 37,609 (8 percent) from the January/February 2002 total of 472,028. While we added a net increase of more than 60,000 new subscribers throughout the calendar year (see chart at right), we also renewed our waiting room subscriptions, resulting in around 100,000 waiting rooms dropping from our files and thus our print run. Therefore, during 2002, after also figuring in non-renewing subscribers, around 100,000 new readers received the magazine.

We are now in the process of replacing those non-renewing waiting rooms with individual *GN* sub-

scribers. The end result will be a much healthier percentage of individual subscribers in our overall print run. A print run of around half a million is our goal for the end of the fiscal year June 30, 2003. The following chart shows the growth of the *GN* magazine over the past seven years.

January Issue of Year	Print Run	Increase Over Previous Year
1997	39,742	NA
1998	71,030	77%
1999	146,883	107%
2000	261,372	78%
2001	323,568	24%
2002	472,028	46%
2003	434,419	-8%

We also reprinted 120,000 *Bible Study Course* lessons and 100,000 copies of *The Good News Special Issue*, which is sent to new subscribers and as one-time gift copies.

Peter Eddington/Scott Ashley

Canada Plans National Ad

The Canadian Media Committee has made arrangements to advertise the *Good News in Alive* magazine starting in its April issue. *Alive* has a circulation of 200,000 and is distributed by subscription and through health food stores. The April issue will include a four-color tear-out card offering a free subscription to the *GN*. "This is the first time in several years that we have been able to launch a cross-Canada advertising campaign. Consequently, we are most enthusiastic," wrote Anthony Wasilkoff in the Jan. 23 Canadian Report.



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