



News At a Glance

Camp Staff Needed

Two United Youth Camps are in need of additional staff. Camp Hye Sierra is in need of additional boy and girl counselors. The Teton Challenge Camp is in need of additional boy counselors. Please contact James Capo (james_capo@ucg.org) for Hye Sierra and Paul Luecke (paul_luecke@ucg.org) for the Teton.

Ghana Welcomes International Visitors for the Feast

International visitors are welcome to visit Ghana for the Feast of Tabernacles, and will have the opportunity to attend all three Feast sites: Accra (the capital city), Kumasi (the capital of the Ashanti region) and Cape Coast. Western-style hotels will be offered in each of these sites.

The price is about \$2,500 per person (double occupancy) including airfare from the United States.

If you are interested, please contact Melvin Rhodes by E-mail at melvin_rhodes@ucg.org for more information.

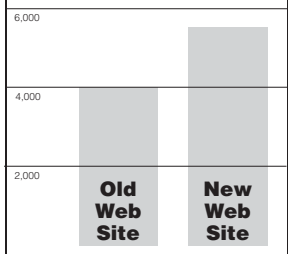
Camp Staff Members Receive Wilderness First Aid Certificates

On April 30 and May 1, eight men who serve at United Youth Camps earned Wilderness First Aid certificates

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United Statistics

Internet Visits Per Day



GCE Chooses Council of Elders Members

Tony Wasilkoff (international member), Bob Dick, Mario Seiglie and Dick Thompson were selected by the General Conference of Elders to serve on the 12-member Council of Elders for the next three years.

Joel Meeker was also ratified to continue for the next two years in the vacated international position he filled in January.

Biographies of Mr. Dick, Mr. Sei-



Bob Dick

glie, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Meeker can be found on the Church's Web site at www.ucg.org/about/council/. Below is a brief biography of Mr. Wasilkoff, operation manager for the UCG in Canada, and the newest Council member.



Tony Wasilkoff

Anthony (Tony) Wasilkoff Mario Seiglie

was born in a small town in Saskatchewan, Canada, in 1948. He came into contact with the Church by listening to the World

Tomorrow radio program on CFQC Saskatoon beginning in 1962. He attended Ambassador College, Pasadena campus, from 1966 to 1970.

While at college, he met his wife-to-be, Linda Eslinger, which led to



Dick Thompson

their marriage in June 1971 in Monroe, Louisiana. The Wasilkoffs served in the field ministry in Louisiana and Mississippi until their transfer to southern Ontario in the summer of 1972. The Wasilkoffs have served in Canada in various pastorates in Ontario, Alber-

See "Council," page 5

GCE Holds Eighth Annual Meeting



UCG elders and wives gather for the Chairman's Reception Saturday night, May 3. Right, Gary Petty and Ken Treybig share a laugh (photos by Janet Treadway)

The eighth annual meeting of the UCG General Conference of Elders began with more than 400 elders and wives registered, over 100 more than last year.

Sunday, May 4, was a very full day for the General Conference of Elders, including six international

reports, a special tribute to deceased elders and wives, the official business session with balloting and reports from the administration, three keynote addresses and a

See "GCE," page 2

Youth United to Become Printed Magazine

■ Joining forces with *Us Teens* to better serve teens and young adults.

Beginning this fall, the first printed issue of a new magazine will be sent to all young people in United. The new magazine will be printed quarterly and will combine the efforts of *Youth United* and *Us Teens*, Roy Holladay announced in the April 24 *Home Office Update*.

"For about 2 1/2 years now, United has been producing an on-line magazine for young people titled *Youth United*," Mr. Holladay said. "It has had a good, solid start and managing editor David Treybig and his staff are to be commended for their excellent articles about key issues for our youth. Also, during the last eight years, the Cincinnati North congregation has produced a printed publication titled *Us Teens*. This has been a fine publication, enjoying a wide circulation, devoted primarily to sharing news about young people, as well as providing biblical material. Jim O'Brien (pastor of Cincinnati North) and his team are also to be complimented for their years of dedicated service to our youth in this way . . .

"The emphasis and focus of both publications will be retained in the new magazine . . . More details will be announced as the summer goes along." UN

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New Web Pages Help Members Watch the World

by Tom Robinson and
Scott Ashley

With so much happening so quickly in today's world, how can you keep up?

United has recently added two new features to the UCG Web site to help people follow Christ's instruction in Luke 21:29-36 to watch world events—and to help make sense of all that's going on.

At the top of the home page you'll now notice a link to a weekly commentary on current events written by UCG ministers and editors. This will help our site to remain relevant in the face of major breaking stories.

Also, we've added a new page to our Resources section called "Current World News & Trends" (you'll find a link to it on our home page). Inspired by our *Good News* magazine feature "World News and Trends," the Web feature is updated every weekday with links

to important news stories from around the world—many that are, at least in a general way, related to Bible prophecy.

This new feature should not be confused with the world news ticker that appears on some of our Web pages—a service we subscribe to that automatically updates with breaking stories from the various newswire services. Rather, the "Current World News & Trends" page is updated by members of our staff, who sift through dozens of sources on the Internet each day for relevant and important stories. Many important things are happening in the world that receive far too little attention in the mainstream media.

In the "News Analysis" section of the page we link to interesting commentaries from outside sources about current events and trends. While we don't necessarily endorse everything in these pieces, we do recommend them as important and informative reading for

our members and Web page users. Indeed, this section is really the heart and core of the page—for while the news section is helpful in relating what's happening, this section helps to explain the deeper significance of these events.

Indeed, it is with that goal that we've begun creating our own commentaries as mentioned above.

In addition, the "Current World News & Trends" page also contains a section titled "Articles of Interest," where you'll find articles of more general biblical interest or that are less time-sensitive than the news postings. We also place longer, more in-depth pieces here. In essence, this category is a catchall for material that doesn't readily fit in the other two, but which we still consider to be important and educational.

The various links in the different sections are accompanied by a few lines of

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News At a Glance

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at Malone College in Canton, Ohio.

Those receiving this certification included Mike Blackwell, Howard Davis, Matthew Fenchel, Larry Greider, Mark Mickelson, Dave Register, Greg Sargent and David Treybig. This credentialing is needed when UYC activities are held in locations that are one or more hours removed from professional medical access.

David Treybig

Ordinations and Credentialings Announced

Larry Lambert was ordained an elder on April 17. He and his wife, Wilma, serve the Charlotte, North Carolina, congregation.

Will McLoughlin was ordained an elder on April 12. He and his wife, Diane, serve the Bricket Wood, England, congregation.

Doug Gray was ordained an elder on March 15. He and his wife, Evelyn Mary, serve the Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, congregation.

Bernard Hongerlout was credentialed at the last Council meetings. He and his wife, Linda, serve the Kansas City, Missouri, congregation.

Jean-Marie Mundeli was also credentialed, and he and his wife, Pelagie, serve in Rwanda.

Bruce Bird was also credentialed, and he and his wife, Donna, serve the Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, congregation.

More Cable Access TV Stations Added

The following stations have been added to the *Good News* television station log in recent weeks due to brethren reading the cable access articles in the February *United News* and sponsoring the program.

Arkansas: Mena.

Illinois: Aurora, North Aurora, Montgomery, Oswego and Bristol (one station); Bolingbrook; Chicago (two stations); Manhattan and Elwood; Naperville; Plainfield; Rolling Meadows; Romeoville.

Indiana: Bloomington.

Texas: El Paso.

West Virginia: Morgantown.

"We anticipate additional stations will be added in upcoming weeks as brethren in various communities continue to contact their cable access stations in regard to the *Good News* television program," said Steve Nutzman, pastor of the Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation, which produces the *Good News* television program. The two stations in the city of Chicago will begin in June.

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Q&A session with the Council of Elders.

International Reports

Clyde Kilough opened the meeting at 9 calling on Walter Tannert for the opening prayer. Mr. Kilough drew attention to the theme of this conference, "Maximizing Your Ministry," and quoted the preamble of the UCG/IA Constitution and the mission statement to show the purpose behind the GCE annual meetings.

Mr. Kilough then introduced the six international reports scheduled for this year.

Canada

Rainer Salomaa, chairman of the Canadian National Council, presented some statistics about the country and UCG in Canada:

- About 30 million people live in Canada.
- 24 UCG groups meet across Canada.
- 683 record attendance.
- 503 took the Passover.
- 421 members on file.
- About 22,000 names on file.
- Last year 10,082 items mailed out from the office per month.
- 20 credentialed elders (six salaried, one half salary).
- Average age of salaried elders is 63.

Mr. Salomaa showed slides of the elders and office employees. He also talked about the efforts to preach the gospel in Canada. Currently the Canadian office is receiving responses to an ad that appeared in *Alive*, a health magazine. He explained that the most cost-effective area of media is through the Internet.

Caribbean

Arnold Hampton described his relationship with the Caribbean area, which he serves along with Kingsley Mather. In 1982 Mr. Hampton and his family moved to Barbados where they served for several years. Since United started, there has been growth throughout the area, usually starting with just one or two on an island. Now there are an average

of 35 attending in Barbados and about 15 in St. Lucia. In St. Vincent there is still only one, but the seed is planted.

Mr. Hampton is personally responsible for four countries (along with his two congregations in Maryland). He visits his two Caribbean congregations every other month, and the other islands less often.

One of the big needs in the area is for manpower, so they started the Caribbean Leadership Training (CLT) program. Now they need to carry it to the next level, to a mentoring program. The CLT is bearing fruit already. Mr. Hampton was asked to perform a funeral, but the plane ticket was too expensive, so he asked a CLT attendee to do it. Things went well, thankfully, since the prime minister of that island was at the funeral.

Mr. Hampton also mentioned the first summer camp held in Jamaica last year, and the plans for it this summer.

Mr. Hampton and Mr. Mather also serve Guyana, an English-speaking country on the Caribbean coast of South America. Mr. Hampton described the experience of baptizing people in a river he later found had piranha in it!

Italy

Carmelo Anastasi brought greetings from the 36 members, 14 children and 21 prospective members in Italy. Though small in number, that's actually more than a 400 percent increase!

Mr. Anastasi told about a new member who was on a police force and tried to get permission to not carry gun. His superiors wouldn't let him until he threatened to go to the press. Now he has been given early retirement and a pension.

The Church has invited subscribers from various areas of Italy for Bible studies. In one city 11 attended, a 5 percent response. However in Rome only 3 responded. Mr. Anastasi pointed out the need to increase the preaching of the gospel in Italy. Currently they send out about 5,000 copies of the Italian *Good News* every two months, and they want to increase to 15,000.

They have also been doing leadership training, and training a man in editorial work to "replace me someday," Mr. Anastasi said.

Mr. Anastasi mentioned that they will have 150 or more at the Feast—but that there's still room for transfers!

Far East

Dave Baker explained that although he doesn't look or sound Asian, he was baptized in Asia, engaged in Asia, ordained in Asia and thought he would die there.

Mr. Baker serves as senior pastor to the Philippines, which he was told is the third largest English-speaking nation in the world. There are 450 to 500 members, three Feast sites and six elders in the Philippines. There are 6,000 *Good News* subscribers and 2,700 newsstand copies are distributed. The most requested booklet is *Why Does God Allow Suffering?*



The president and chairman join the elders who serve international areas in a photo (photo by Janet Treadway)

Some of the challenges faced by brethren in the Philippines include the fact that many of them are scattered and can only attend once or twice a month. Many of them are underemployed or face problems because of not working on the Sabbath.

Mr. Baker also serves other areas of Asia, and he mentioned interesting letters such as this one from Myanmar:

"I was most inspired by all of your *Bible Study Courses* dealing with the basic teaching of true Christianity. I read every bit of all of your literature as soon as I get it. I save each issue and compile and teach and preach messages based on them in my fellowship. As I was a part-time lecturer at my brother's Bible seminary for this year, my students were also blessed through all your literature."

There are a number of subscribers in India, even though we have never adver-

tised there. One reason is that apparently a Tamil-language religious magazine spoke positively of our free literature. Mr. Baker pointed out that since it can cost half a day's wage or more just to write to us, they aren't just requesting it because it is free. In fact, one reader traveled more than a day in monsoon rains to meet him in southern India, and gave a donation to the Church before he left.

Mr. Baker also mentioned his visit with a group that he met in northeast India that wants to be affiliated with UCG. Their beliefs are very similar to ours, and they wouldn't let him pay for his expenses. They have four services each Sabbath! They keep Passover on the 15th of the first month instead of the 14th, and Mr. Baker told them this would be a roadblock. They wrote back with a

beautiful attitude of desiring God's truth.

Mr. Baker said he is often humbled by those he hears from in Asia. They just want things that we take for granted, such as to meet a minister and to go to a Sabbath service.

Currently we are only sending one G/N for every half million people in Asia. Doing God's work in Asia is truly an impossible task without God's help.

Ghana

Melvin Rhodes briefly recounted the history of our association with the Remnant Church of God in Ghana, which led to 11 full-time pastors being ordained in Ghana last year, and another being added more recently.

Since then they have been working with 21 non-salaried elders who are being prepared for credentialing.

Mr. Rhodes mentioned that they can

May 2003
Vol. 9, No. 4



UnitedNews
News of the United Church of God, an International Association

United News (ISSN 1088-8020) is published monthly except April and October by the United Church of God, an International Association, 555 Technecenter Drive, Milford, OH 45150. © 2003 United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Periodicals Postage paid at Milford, Ohio 45150, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post publications mail agreement number 1487167.

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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.goodnews.org.uk> the British Isles Web site, <http://www.ucg.org.ph> the Philippines Web site and <http://www.ucgrsa.org> the Southern Africa Web site.

take up to 40 visitors for the Feast of Tabernacles this year. He explained that Ghana is a lot safer than walking around in Detroit (he said he realizes that's not saying much, but said that it really is safe).

Most of the brethren are very poor. One man feeds his family on roughly \$230 a year. But a number of members are better off and two even own their own cars. Mr. Rhodes pointed out that the Western tendency is to think that giving money will solve every problem. But it is better to help them build an infrastructure and give them tools, rather than a handout. Mr. Rhodes explained that you can destroy a community if you give too much to some—throwing money around can create resentment. In Ghana they do have enough to eat.

United Kingdom

Peter Hawkins gave a PowerPoint presentation about UCG-British Isles, highlighting their desire for "Peace and Progress."

As "CEO" ("Conductor of the English Orchestra," as he expressed it), Mr. Hawkins sees his role as conductor of an effective team forming there. He said the Church will be striving to follow its constitution, which contains collaborative, supportive and self-evaluating elements. UCG-British Isles will be seeking a worldwide view, using UCGIA videos at services every three weeks and welcoming international visitors coming to the United Kingdom as speakers during the year and the Feast.

Currently there are five ministers and various volunteers helping in many areas serving more than 80 members in six congregations. Attendance for Unleavened Bread was up 16 percent.

The *GN* circulation is 2,600, including magazines sent to English-speaking Europe. They have asked readers in the "British and European Supplement" to the *GN* if they are interested in meeting with us. Around 20 requests have been received so far.

Just prior to leaving for the GCE, there were five additional calls from those with no previous association with the Church of God wishing to attend services.

Mr. Hawkins pointed out some of the strengths and weaknesses experienced by the Church. The strengths include a

dedicated membership and ministry; but the weaknesses include the small number and scattered nature of members and ministers and the aging of the non-salaried ministry.

Britain today has overall prosperity and a reading public, but a general lack of biblical knowledge.

A Special Tribute to Deceased Elders and Wives

After a break, Mr. Kilough introduced a moving ceremony that will be continued in future years: a tribute to deceased elders and wives. Since this was the first time, 28 elders and wives who have died since United started in 1995 were honored. (One who was inadvertently overlooked will be honored next year.) Mr. Kilough thanked Carl Falzone for printing a beautiful 36-page, full-color brochure in tribute to these men and women. Then he introduced Ken Giese to present the tribute.

Mr. Giese then showed slides and read touching tributes and memories from many family, friends and colleagues of these faithful, dedicated servants who had such an important influence on so many members.

Those honored were:

Garland Gay Gould Berg (2002)
Richard (Dick) Case (2001)
Kenneth William Christopher (2000)
Oswald G. (Ozzie) Engelbart (2000)
Kenneth A. Graham Sr. (2002)
Tolu Ha'angana (2002)
Lama Jeanne Hammer (1995)
E. Charles Hanson (1998)
Iris Hegvold (1996)
Selmer Hegvold (2002)
David House (1997)
Marvin Hush (2000)
James Earl Jenkins (2003)
Glen William Keeley Jr. (2000)
Duane Franklin Ledy (1996)
Jerald J. McLaughlin (2000)
Florence Amelia Mischnick (1996)
Wiley Thomas Morgan (1995)
Eugene A. Noel (2002)
Chalmer Pifer (1999)
Thelma Pifer (2002)
Bernard Francis Schnippert (1998)
Sidney Earl Smith (2002)
Anne Teitgen (2002)
Charles Wagerle (1995)
Gerald D. Waterhouse (2002)
Valden White (1997)
Christian Diedrik Zemichow (1997)

Later it was learned that Patricia Arritt (2001) had not been included. Mr. Kilough announced that she would be included in the tribute next year.

Business Session

After a lunch break, Clyde Kilough called the meeting to order and called on John Miller, an elder from Ohio, to give the opening prayer. After the approval of the minutes, the balloting took place (see the results below).

President's Address

Roy Holladay welcomed everyone, and mentioned that this GCE also provided an opportunity for a 40th reunion of the Ambassador College class of 1963. They got together with their mates for dinner Friday night.

Mr. Holladay announced that the large offering given on Pentecost 1995 just after United started has finally been surpassed during Unleavened Bread this year. He also ran down some encouraging statistics:

- Individual subscriptions to *The Good News* continue to increase. Now only 4 percent of *GNs* go to waiting rooms, compared to half a few years ago.
 - 2.51 million booklets have been printed since United started.
 - 165,000 copies of the top booklet (*What Is Your Destiny?*) have been printed.
 - The redesigned Web site has attracted increased numbers of visitors and the time they spend on the site has also increased.
 - There has been a steady increase in church attendance.
 - 14 percent of the Church's income has come from those who don't yet consider themselves part of United.
 - 4,593 donors are on file.
 - 2,022 coworkers are on file.
- Mr. Holladay asked the elders to convey his appreciation to the members for their support. He said that to him winning the war in Iraq means that perhaps God is giving us a little more time to do a work.

He encouraged everyone to get involved with the two cable access television programs, which have both improved in quality. He said if we could go on more stations, we could get 30,000 or 40,000 responses a year (up from

about 4,000 now) with little additional cost.

Mr. Holladay also highlighted the commentary that is now being put on the Web site each week, and which we hope to do daily in the future. We also hope to have short video snippets on the Web site, perhaps 1, 2 or 3 minutes long. He explained that TV and the Internet are merging, and we hope to take advantage of the trend. The E-learning program also seems to have unlimited potential.

God has had a very clear picture of what He is planning to do, and He has



The ABC Chorale performs during Sabbath services May 3 (photo by Peter Eddington)

been calling people to help. "Bringing many sons to glory" is the vision in the Strategic Plan. Outside the Church of God community they don't understand the meaning of life, Mr. Holladay said. We have a responsibility to prepare a people to be the sons and daughters of God.

United has been a leader in reaching out to other groups and promoting unity. Mr. Holladay said, giving examples such as CGCF and the Remnant Church of God. He said he hopes we can continue with that. He asked for everyone's prayers that God will continue to guide us.

Treasurer's Report

Tom Kirkpatrick pointed out that the last set of audited financial statements was printed in the September-October 2002 *United News*. To report on the current situation, he passed out a summary cash flow statement through May 4, or 83 percent of the fiscal period. Actual category one income was about 2 percent above budget, but Dr. Kirkpatrick projected that we'll likely end the fiscal

year slightly below budget in category one, and over in category two (Holy Day offerings). This would put us close to the budgeted \$18,240,000 amount.

Let's we feel that is a large budget, he pointed out that four NBA players have higher incomes than the entire Church budget!

Dr. Kirkpatrick also looked at the income compared with the previous 12 months, which showed a 2.7 percent increase. (He said this measure shows "how fast the train has been moving.") Considering these trends, he feels it is

only prudent to go no more than the 4.2 percent increase projected in the budget. He pointed out that God can make the money He does give us go farther than we think possible by multiplying the seed (2 Corinthians 9:10).

Dr. Kirkpatrick reported that the salary ranges are unchanged from

last year's report.

Ministerial Services Report: "A Work in Progress"

Richard Pinelli, Ministerial Services operation manager, said that in the eight years since United started, things have been settling. Now there is a feeling of peace and settlement and no longer the "rock and roll" of earlier years. Now it's like a sign he once saw entering a small town in Texas: "Home of 10,000 happy people, with the exception of a few old grouches."

Watching the attendance and offerings increase is a beautiful thing, Mr. Pinelli said. There are now 447 elders worldwide, and we again have over 19,000 for the Feast of Tabernacles. Attendance for Holy Days in the United States is over 13,000, and there are about 10,500 attending on regular Sabbaths. He received only four letters of complaint after the Feast—95 percent of problems we've had are gone, he said. Things are not perfect, but they are a

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Thousands Share Pre-GCE Sabbath Service

Between the 766 gathered in Cincinnati, the 133 congregations on the phone hookup and the 120 cyber-cast connections, the audience for the May 3 Sabbath services was one of the largest in United's history. Clyde Kilough said during announcements. More than 400 elders and wives were registered to attend the General Conference of Elders meeting that weekend, over 100 more than last year.

André van Belkum, chairman of UCG in Southern Africa, gave the first split sermon on the need to "Stand Firm." After describing the growth in South Africa (27 percent increase in Passover attendance compared to the previous year), Mr. van Belkum played a tape of a lion's roar. He explained that

a guide told him never to run from a lion, but to stand and face it. Then the lion will generally stop its charge. The Bible shows the need to stay close to God so we can stand firm despite whatever trials that roaring lion, the devil, throws at us.

Aaron Dean, a member of the Council of Elders and a non-salaried elder, gave the second split sermon on our calling to be like Christ in service to others. He compared our calling with the call he received 29 years ago to put on a red jacket as a steward serving on the Church's plane. Herbert Armstrong's first instructions were to treat everyone like a king or queen—all have a fantastic potential, and it's all about people. At baptism we all put on the

"red jacket" in agreeing to serve Christ, no matter what. Mr. Dean used memorable examples of service by Mr. Armstrong and by the queen of Thailand to illustrate our need to make service a way of life.

Chairman's Reception

After the Sabbath elders and wives registered for the General Conference of Elders meetings and enjoyed an entertaining slide show during the chairman's reception. Doctored photographs humorously illustrated a behind-the-scenes look at the preparations for the GCE. The audience was given a chance to win a prize by guessing who was who in 44 old photographs from the '50s and '60s. **UN**

Ballot Results

At the end of the May 4 afternoon session, Clyde Kilough announced the results of balloting:

- The 2003-04 Strategic Plan passed 305 to 4.
 - The 2003-04 Operation Plan passed 301 to 8.
 - The 2003-04 budget passed 297 to 14.
 - Joel Meeker was ratified to continue in the Council seat he filled in January.
 - Amendment to Bylaw 7.1 clarifying the annual general meeting and Council nomination process passed 293 to 9.
 - Amendment to Bylaw 8.3.1 seeking to redefine the requirements to be eligible for international Council member seats failed 121 to 183.
 - Amendment to Bylaw 8.7.4.1 a and b regarding notice for Council meetings passed 298 to 8.
- Four Council seats are filled each year. The four men selected for three-year terms are:
- Anthony Wasilkoff as an international member of the Council.
 - Robert Dick.
 - Mario Seiglie.
 - Richard Thompson.

News At a Glance

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"After viewing the *Good News* program, a cable access station manager told Chicago UCG member, John Barbush, that he wished all cable access programs were of the same quality as *The Good News*," Mr. Nutzman said.

The Good News is now airing in 12 states and, beginning in June, it will air on 27 stations.

The May-June *Good News* magazine has a log for both cable-access television programs and the *Good News* radio program.

Staff Takes Field Trip to Post Office

March 5, Connie Seelig, Richard Kennebeck and Janet Treadway took part in the open house tour sponsored by the Cincinnati/Dayton Postal Customer Council.



Connie Seelig, Richard Kennebeck and Janet Treadway tour the Cincinnati Post Office March 5

What was it like to visit such a huge operation? It was overwhelming to see the massive amount of mail that goes through this post office each day. Virtually all sorting of mail is done with machines as large as semis. There were conveyor belts everywhere, sending mail to its proper destinations. The Cincinnati Post Office processes over a million pieces of mail each day. The experience left us with a deep appreciation for post office mail processing facilities.

Janet Treadway

Reprints Added to Home Office Literature Stocks

Due to the increasing need for information dealing with social and family relationships in answering reader questions, Scott Ashley has recently produced a number of reprint articles on such issues. The material was gleaned from past editions of *The Good News* on subjects including smoking, abortion, depression and mental and physical health. Articles dealing with marriage and spousal

See "News at a Glance," page 24

"GCE," continued from page 3

whole lot better than eight years ago, he said.

Mr. Pinelli reported that 896 people with a Sabbatarian background contacted the ministry in the last year (a decrease of 25 percent). Another 832 new people without a Sabbatarian background have become interested in contacting a minister because of our literature (a 1 percent increase). There have been 47 baptisms of brand-new people not of Sabbatarian background.

Mr. Pinelli reported that the Church has hired four of the men who attended the ministerial candidate program last August, and another is yet to be hired this fiscal year. Three more are in the budget for next year.

Altogether pastors have recorded driving more than 16 million miles since United started, and if you add the miles other elders turned in, it would be 21 million miles or more than 800 times around the earth!

What makes United special? Mr. Pinelli said it's the multi-tasking ministry who have taken on many of the support functions of the Church. They do much more than pastoring: writing articles, PCD, teaching at ABC, Feast, review teams, camp, managing editors, education programs and much more. The wives have given incredible support. It's inspiring to be around this group, Mr. Pinelli said.

Media and Communications Services Report

Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services operation manager, reported that there have been many accomplishments over past 12 months, such as the rise in number of individual subscribers to *The Good News*.

Another very positive area is the redesigned Web site. Two new features have been added to encourage Web visitors to use our site to follow Christ's instruction to watch—and to help make sense of all that's happening. Commentaries by our writers are posted each week and "Current World News and Trends" provides links to other news and commentaries.

Mr. Eddington reported that unfortunately we are not going to reach our target of 500,000 for the *GN* circulation this fiscal year. The 11 percent decrease in *GN* is partly because of lower than expected renewal of our waiting rooms. He mentioned that for the coming year it will be a challenge to get back up to half a million.

However, having 77 percent of our circulation as individual subscribers is a healthy figure, he said. Individual subscribers have increased from 88,983 in 1999 to 354,590 today.

The *Bible Study Course* is going into 11,130 non-member households, and 3,738 graduates of the *BSC* are receiving tapes. Beyond that, 1,098 graduates of the tape program responded to an offer for more information from the Church. There have been a total of 914,000 lessons printed to date.

Mr. Eddington also reported:

- *World News and Prophecy* is being offered to coworkers; the print run is now 19,400, up 15 percent
- 5.75 million card pack promotions

have been sent, bringing in 36,146 subscriptions at a cost per response of \$2.33.

- 21,840 brochures were distributed in 2002. This promotion has a very cost effective \$1.49 cost per response.

- 742,900 newsstand copies have been distributed total, 420,100 last year alone.

- Total mail processed is down 11 percent because of decreased number of promotions.

- Literature requests through the Web site are up 73 percent.



Kingsley Mather addresses the media meeting (photo by Peter Eddington)

- Donation mail is up 7 percent.
- Non-member donations are up 21.1 percent.
- 24 percent increase in donors and coworkers.
- 167 new donors per month.
- Total number of members, youth and associated is up 4 percent.
- 42 percent increase in data transfer on the *ucg.org* Web site.
- Near 170,000 visitors to the site in April.
- *GN* radio has brought in over 7,000 calls and is currently on 16 stations.
- Radio and TV log is in the May/June *GN*.
- Mr. Eddington encouraged pastors to arrange for one or both cable-access television programs to be aired in their city.

Keynote Addresses: "Maximizing Your Ministry"

Mr. Kilough thanked the GCE planning task force, saying they've done a tremendous job. Then he introduced the first of three keynote addresses. Paul Luecke pastors four scattered congregations in North Dakota and Manitoba.

"Serving the Small and Scattered Flocks" (Paul Luecke)

The Church has been compared to a household, and Mr. Luecke said a "new household" was given to pastors eight years ago (Matthew 24:45). The square footage has increased. There are fewer people, fewer young people, fewer helpers; but the household has the same needs.

Mr. Luecke encouraged the elders to exploit the advantages of having smaller congregations to develop local leadership and make full use of the Sabbath.

The pastor is better able to get acquainted with the brethren in a smaller congregation, and so he is better able to identify and develop the local leadership.

To maximize the use of the Sabbath, Mr. Luecke gave the following points:

- Members today still need to assemble with their brethren (Hebrews 10:24-

25). He quoted a young person who feels that larger congregations lead to selectivity (cliques). Young people have more opportunities to serve in smaller congregations.

- Members still need to hear from the ministry. Perhaps the ministers can have more effect by tailoring messages specifically to the members, preparing them to teach others in the Kingdom of God. Ministers can also use phone hookups to expand the reach of the message.

- The Sabbath allows us to get to know everyone by spending more time. Because of the distances involved, he can only go to one congregation each Sabbath, so he spends the whole day.

- A small congregation benefits from dignity as much as a large one does. Winnipeg sets up flowers, etc., even though they're only 25 instead of 1,000.

"The Pastor as a Friend" (Jim Chapman)

After spending hours together with the troops in Iraq, even hardened embedded reporters were impressed with the troops they were with. Mr. Chapman used this as a springboard to talk about the privilege of having and being a friend. He said we have a spiritual mandate to become very close friends and to take care of each other as well. John 15:15 shows that Jesus calls us friends. We are a handpicked group (John 15:16). We are to get along with everyone. We are even to love our enemies. Christ prayed for our unity (John 17:11). We are working as a team with God and Christ toward our destiny. If we wouldn't really lay down our life for each other, how will we convince others of the

genuineness of our Christianity (John 13:35)? God will bless our friendships.

The ministerial family is a very special entity—God expects things of them. Mr. Chapman explained that ministers can share with each other. Other ministers provide a safe house where an elder can admit faults, not get preached at or get "the look." Working together on the front lines is a great place to develop friendships, and we have lots of front lines now, Mr. Chapman said.

In 1 Samuel 18 it describes the close friendship of Jonathan and David. What a reunion that will be in the resurrection!

Mr. Chapman encouraged the elders and wives to take advantage of opportunities like the GCE to strengthen their friendships with other elders and wives. Let's try harder to be the best friends we can be with the help of God, he said.

"If I Had to Do It Over Again" (Dale Schurter)

Mr. Schurter thanked everyone for the support and prayers through his most recent trials. He said his most recent near-death experience helped him to know he loves God and Christ at the third level, and that God loves him at the infinite level. He described level one as the knowledge of the great commandment to love God with all your heart, soul and mind. Level two is a deeper level of affirmation, "I love God with all my heart, soul and mind." Level three is much deeper yet, telling God regularly, at least once a day, "I love You with all my heart, soul and mind."

In a 24-hour period, he went from being active to being broken. At first he thought he was just tired, but his wife had to revive him a couple of times. The

1963 AC Class 40th Reunion Held Before GCE



Class of '63 gets together: Barb and Gary Antion, Jan and John Schroeder, Dennis Luker, Roy and Norma Holladay and Lucretia and Fred Kellers

"Why don't we get together to remember our graduation from Ambassador?" was the question proposed by Fred Kellers prior to the General Conference of Elders 2003. There were only a few from the class of '63 who would be able to participate—Roy and Norma Holladay, Dennis Luker, John Schroeder and Gary Antion. They along with their wives agreed that this was a good idea. So, arrangements were made for dinner on an evening prior to the GCE.

Fred and Lucretia Kellers, Roy and Norma Holladay, John and Jan

Schroeder, Gary and Barbara Antion and Dennis Luker (LeeAnn, his wife, was unable to make the trip) met and enjoyed reminiscing about their Ambassador experiences and their current experiences. Several of the couples will also celebrate their 40th anniversaries this year as well. Families and grandchildren were also topics of conversation.

As the evening concluded, all agreed that "old friends" are among the best benefits a person can have.

Gary E. Antion

function of his adrenal gland was as close to being dead as it can be. He asked for anointing and examined the Scriptures (including Matthew 7:7; Exodus 15:6; 23:25; and 20:8-9) in addition to seeking advice from health care providers. He learned that the cause of his health problem was that he always pushed through his tiredness, again and again. He did not want to be an unprofitable servant. When it comes time to rest, he had to learn to do that with all his might as well.

He said if he had to do it over again, he would keep the whole Fourth Commandment better. Since, like the priests, God's servants today are blameless for doing God's work on the Sabbath, ministers too often neglect getting rest (taking a personal day a week, taking vacation). He said it has actually been a blessing that he has only been able to visit one congregation a Sabbath because of his health.

Mr. Schurter said if you find yourself going in the direction of an adrenal crash, take time to rest. Relax for 10 minutes instead of taking a coffee or Coke break. Confirm to God, "I love You with all my heart, soul and mind, and love my neighbor as myself." Practice the health principles you already know, Mr. Schurter said.

In the evening the Council of Elders answered a variety of questions and comments from elders and wives.

Concluding Remarks

At the end of Monday's workshop sessions, Clyde Kilough commented on the peaceful, enjoyable meetings held this year, and encouraged the assembled elders and wives to use the times of peace to look back and take stock so we can move forward.

He said the seminars had been designed to help the elders grow individually. In order to truly maximize our ministry as a group, we must also minimize our casualties. In the context of war, we often hear the strange phrase,

"friendly fire." Between 17 and 28 percent of casualties in the first Gulf War were caused by friendly fire—soldiers on the same side killing each other.

The basics of combat have always been the same: Where am I? Where's my buddy? Where's the enemy? Friendship is keeping track of each other, Mr. Kilough said.

There's a lot in the Bible about friendly fire in the spiritual sense. There are



Carmelo Anastasi translates International meeting into Italian for Angelo Di Vita (photo by Peter Eddington)

two tendencies when fired on by a friend: to get discouraged or to fire back. Some are wounded right now, Mr. Kilough said. How many times have we wounded others?

Wounded people can't fight very effectively. Wounded elders minimize our effectiveness. Christ is sensitive to friendly fire, because He probably has experienced it the most.

When we find out we have wounded others, our first reaction almost always is, "I didn't mean to." But that doesn't make it hurt any less. We need to go to our brother, repent, forgive.

Ephesians 4:2-3 gives us some of the "high-tech" tools we need to avoid friendly fire. "With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Mike Bennett

Elders Attend Workshops on "Maximizing Your Ministry"

Monday, May 5, the elders and wives attending the GCE had the choice of attending up to five of the 15 workshop sessions available.

Life Innovations Certification: This half-day seminar allowed ministers and wives to be certified to use the marriage counseling instruments provided by Life Innovations. These include the whole range of Prepare/Enrich profiles for both premarital and marriage enrichment counseling. (Larry Salyer)

Speaking Skills Part I—Creating Sleeplessness: This session explored ways to add passion, intensity, energy and life to messages. (Arnold Hampton and Fred Kellers)

Speaking Skills Part II—Effective Interactive Teaching: This session addressed the skills needed to conduct effective interactive Bible studies, classes, training sessions and discussions. (David Johnson and Randy Schreiber)

Effective Marriage Counseling: This session used an interactive approach to discuss marital problems a pastor may face in his pastoral experience. (Gary Antion and Doug Horchak)

Three Steps to Effective Referral Counseling: This seminar looked at the minister's role in helping members obtain professional, specialized counseling when it is needed. (Dennis Luker and John Cafourek)

PowerPoint Basics: This workshop looked at the basic rules of presentation for sermons or Bible studies. (Randy Schreiber)

PowerPoint Advanced: This seminar provided those who had a basic knowledge of PowerPoint with

a chance to learn more. (Jim Franks)

Maximizing Your Youth Pastoral Skills: This workshop featured a short PowerPoint presentation to highlight the ongoing efforts of the United Church of God to serve our youth, followed by a discussion on ways to help them connect with God and the work He is doing through the Church. A panel of ministers who serve on the Youth Education Team, at United Youth Camps and in a public high school were on hand to answer questions and moderate the discussion. (David Treybig, Larry Greider, James Capo and Dan Salcedo)

Financial Planning for the Ministry: This session addressed some of the unique financial planning issues faced by the UCG ministry. (Britton M. Taylor, CFP, Registered Investment Advisor)

Getting to Retirement: This lecture was designed to give some specific strategies for the ministry to maximize returns and minimize risk. The instructor gave some of the tips he gave students when teaching finance at Ambassador. (Aaron Dean)

Developing Leadership Mentoring Skills: This seminar looked at how mentoring can help our membership and leadership reach their full potential by conserving and transferring special know-how in areas of spiritual leadership and development. (Richard Pinelli and Doug Horchak)

Maximizing Your Leadership Skills: This seminar focused on how and why we should master our personal leadership skills to be more effective as a servant and an individ-

ual. The presenter holds a master's degree in leadership from Bellevue University where he serves as an adjunct faculty member. (Greg Thomas)

Maximizing Your Health Through Exercise: This seminar looked at:

1. How much exercise is needed for health benefits vs. weight loss vs. achieving a high level of physical fitness.
2. Establishing the habit of regular activity vs. a crash course in self-inflicted misery each January.
3. Why your metabolism doesn't have to slow down as you age.
4. Common exercise myths.
5. Some simple ways to get more activity into your days.

The presenter has 20 years experience as a fitness instructor/trainer, is certified by the American Council on Exercise and has been an adjunct instructor in the Exercise and Sport Science Department at Colorado State University. (Jacque Melear)

Living the Life of a Ministerial Wife: This ladies' symposium discussed the following areas: Your value to the Church, being a support system to your husband, making your health a priority and positive parenting. (Moderator—Judy Servidio; panel—DeLee Hargrove, Dee Kilough, Jane Suckling and Jenny Bradford)

Maximizing Your Computer Skills: The advent of the computer and the Internet has revolutionized the work of the ministry. This session offered tips on Internet resources and Bible software programs. (Vic Kubik and Larry Walker). **UN**

Festival Coordinators Meet to Finalize Feast Plans

by Dave Myers

Planning for the 2003 Feast of Tabernacles is well under way. The Festival coordinators and Festival team met for a half-day conference in Cincinnati on Friday, May 2, prior to the General Conference of Elders annual meeting. The Festival conference, led by Ministerial Services operation manager Richard Pinelli, addressed numerous issues in preparation for organization and observance of the Feast of Tabernacles this fall.

Some items of discussion focused on the following topics. New U.S. Festival sites for 2003 include Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii; Steamboat Springs, Colorado; Lexington, Kentucky; and Kerrville, Texas—all expected to be popular and well attended. Members may read about these new sites in the *Festival Planning Brochure* that has been mailed

to each U.S. household.

It was noted that another publication, the *U.S. and Canadian Festival Site Activity Announcements* brochure, describing all Festival activities at each site, will be mailed to all member households during the month of July.

All U.S. and Canadian sites this year are planning to have a type of singles' hospitality area—a location where singles can meet to fellowship and plan activities together.

Other topics of discussion involved manpower assignments, how to prepare for the senior citizens' luncheon and activity, charitable projects, coordinator transfer requests, special music coordination, opening night services and speakers' guidelines.

Due to lack of time, discussion on long-term planning will be pursued at the next meeting of the coordinators following the 2003 Feast. **UN**

"Council Chosen," continued from page 1

ta and British Columbia ever since.

Both Tony and Linda began attending with the United Church of God in the fall of 1995 in Calgary, Alberta, where a small congregation had already begun. The Wasilkoffs now reside in Mississauga, Ontario, where they serve in both the Canadian office and in several pastorates.

The Wasilkoffs' children, now grown, reside and work in the Cincinnati area. The Wasilkoffs' special interest revolves around their 1-year-old grandson, Logan, as all older and wiser grandparents will readily understand. Although Tony and Linda enjoy going for walks, gardening and working in

the back yard, their principal current avocation has become grandparenting.



Tony and Linda Wasilkoff

After the shock wears off, Tony anticipates contributing to Council of Elders sessions by participating with the other international members in adding an international perspective to Council meetings. **UN**

GCE Time Is Meetings Time

In addition to the General Conference of Elders meeting, a number of other meetings were scheduled to take advantage of the many elders being together.

May 1 Council chairman Clyde Kilough met with the international elders to discuss questions of international interest. The *Good News* TV crew had a planning meeting as well.

May 2 the Media and Communications Services department met with the Media Committee of the Council and other writers and editors.

Also May 2 the Expelled Elder Appeal Committee and the Member Appeal Committee (EEAC/MAC) met, as did the Ministerial Education task force.

May 6 the Prophecy Advisory Committee met, as did the U.S. regional pastors.

The Council of Elders had three days of meetings May 6 to 8. Reports of the Council meetings can be found at www.ugc.org/about/council/updates.htm.



News From **Around the World**

UCG Elder Makes First Visit to Brethren in Portugal

by **Jorge de Campos**

My wife and I are extremely encouraged and uplifted after visiting the few scattered brethren in Portugal.

During our trip to the General Conference of Elders meeting, we decided to travel from South Africa via Portugal to see my 85-year-old mother, some of our relatives and at the same time visit the few scattered Portuguese brethren.

We contacted Alec Surratt at the home office and got the names of two people in Portugal to whom I wrote. We ended up meeting several more as well.

The first person we met was Joaquim de Campos e Ferreira Levy. Mr. Levy is

of Jewish descent, born in Portugal about 67 years ago, and due to a number of difficulties that he fell prey to, he lives in a farm cottage in the middle of nowhere. He doesn't have running water or electricity, but does have a phone.

We had the privilege of meeting him on the sixth day of Unleavened Bread, April 22. He was most encouraged to meet us, as he mentioned he had been praying for the opportunity to talk to someone from United and receiving my letter was an answer to prayer.

Although he has a strong Jewish background (he was training to be a rabbi), he came to realize that Christ is the Messiah and started attending a group

called the Assembly of God. He was ordained by that group and he taught the Sabbath and the Holy Days. In fact he calculated the calendar independently, and came to understand the identical dates as we do.

Due to his belief in the Sabbath and God's law, he was later asked not to teach any further to those in the Assembly of God. Later he came in contact with the Worldwide Church of God, and he gave me a copy of the letter that he wrote in 1989 in which he emphasized the need of Christian fellowship, and strongly condemned the point that some "reject the spiritual law of God, considering it annulled by Christ!"

The brethren in Portugal were not told of the doctrinal changes during the first months of 1995 until they went to the Feast in Spain. The sermons at that Feast gave them the first indication that things had changed. Sometime during 1996 Mr. Levy was approached to be ordained by Worldwide, to which he refused as he was not prepared to teach their new doctrines. He has since lost contact with all brethren and has been faithfully obeying God by himself.

Mr. Levy has been in touch with ministers and pastors from local churches in his region, and has taught them about the



Joaquim Levy with Jorge, Kathy and Jennifer de Campos (photos by Stephen de Campos)

See "Portugal," page 8

Feast Site in Bolivia Announced

Once again we plan to have a Feast site in Bolivia. This year the chosen site is the Hotel Monarca in the very picturesque town of Chulumani, in the province of Sud-Yungas.



Hotel Monarca, the site of the Feast in Bolivia, has a swimming pool and incredible views of the mountains

Chulumani is a town of around 10,000 inhabitants and is located 75 miles to the north of La Paz, in the middle of the jungle called Sud-Yungas. It is surrounded by mountains covered by vegetation of all kinds. Wherever you are in town you can hear the singing of birds which inspires you to meditate on God's beautiful creation.

The Feast site is a special place to rest the body and to have the peace of mind we very rarely have now in our world. I am sure those who attend this site will worship the true God in the most natural, beautiful environment we could ever have in this hectic time of history.

The scenery on the road to Chulumani is just breathtaking. You go from mountains covered by snow to the middle of the jungle; from no vegetation at all to tall trees of all kinds.

Hotel Monarca has all of the facilities required to have an unforgettable Feast, including nice rooms and cabins, all with an incredible view of mountains and hills. The hotel is like an oasis in the middle of the jungle. This Feast could be a real adventure for those who attend.

Meals will be served in the same

hotel for everybody attending the Feast. We also recommend that everyone stay in the same hotel in order to have the family environment God wants us to have.

The tropical climate will necessitate a swimming pool for sure. Well, the hotel has an Olympic-sized one! The Feast will be here in the spring for this part of the world. That means even more flowers and greenery will be everywhere. Temperatures will be in the low 80s.

The cost for nine nights with three meals per day and transportation to and from the Feast site is an incredibly low \$100! The hotel will provide its own bus to transport us. Children between 7 and 12 years of age will pay \$70. Children under 7 will just pay for the food, a total of \$40 for the nine days!

Please consider attending this Feast site. We are expecting about 40 brethren



The Bolivian Feast site is surrounded by natural beauty

from Bolivia and those of you Spanish-speaking members who decide to attend. Services will only be in Spanish with no English translations.

We will have the first service the evening of Friday, Oct. 10.

If you decide to come, please contact Saul Langarica at the following E-mail address: slangarica@unidachile.org or contact Raul Machicao at rmachicao@unidachile.org.

Saul Langarica

Canadian National Conference Meets in Ottawa

by **Rainer Salomaa**

The Canadian National Council held meetings in Ottawa, Ontario, March 5 to 7, and on Sunday, March 9, we had our annual Canadian National Conference meeting.

The National Conference has to approve the yearly budget, strategic plan, operation plan and any proposed amendments to our bylaws as well as select three National Council members for those whose terms expire. At the present moment, we have 22 National Conference members who did just that. They approved the budget as was put forward by the National Council. Our national office does all of the grunt work in preparing the budget. The finance committee of the National Council goes over it in detail, making recommendations to the National Council. The National Council discusses it and finally passes it on to the National Conference for their approval. It is a very collaborative process. So, also, are the strategic and operations plans.

All were approved by the National Conference. There were also some amendments to the bylaws that were balloted on. These were made available for anyone in our local congregations to make statements about.

The whole process involves input and approval from many sources. That is



Canadian National Conference meets with the Ottawa congregation March 8

healthy. The Scriptures mention that in a multitude of counsel there is safety.

The three National Council members who were chosen for new three-year terms are Robert Berendt, David Palmer and Glen White.

Since we were in Canada's capital, we took a few hours to tour parliament. The parliament buildings are divided basically into two sections, the House of Commons and the Senate. Both sides do their part in passing legislation. The legislative process follows a series of defined steps, which includes three readings, committee and report stages and finally royal assent. There is due process.

Without due process in governance, we can end up in anarchy with every man for himself, doing what he thinks is right. A strength that we have in United is that we do follow due process, even if at times it seems time-consuming and

tedious. We do operate within the parameters of our governing documents. These documents are fairly difficult to change quickly. That can be a safety net that helps ensure stability.

Sabbath services in Ottawa were a delight. We had 38 in attendance and took a group picture (see above).

Our next round of meetings will be in Toronto from May 28 to June 1. We have invited the president of the United Church of God, an International Association, Roy Holladay, and his wife, Norma, to attend. They have graciously accepted and we look forward to the event.

On a personal note, my wife and I became grandparents when I was attending the National Council meetings. Our daughter, Tammy, and her husband, Jason, had a cute baby boy they named Isaac. **UN**

U.K. Offers GN to 100,000 in Reader's Digest

After consultation with members of the National Council, UCG-British Isles agreed to insert a card offering *The Good News* to subscribers of the *Reader's Digest* magazine in their May 2003 edition. Originally we planned to have a test of 20,000 cards, but several factors changed that.

Firstly, *Reader's Digest* staff recommended a bigger sample out of their 900,000 subscribers in the United Kingdom. Once we have an average response rate, we can offer *The Good*

News knowing approximately how many may respond. The size of the mailing list obviously impacts on our postage costs for the rest of the year.

Secondly, the cost of printing these cards drops significantly per item at this figure.

Thirdly, we have just started renewing 1,400 of our 2,600 GN mailing list with their first renewal letters. We will need to replace perhaps as many as 1,000 to maintain the list at its present level (May/June being their last copy).

We will be spending around 6,000 British pounds to print and distribute the 100,000 GN offer cards. The response level could be anywhere between 1 and 3 percent, bringing 1,000 to 3,000 new readers to the Church's literature. We'd appreciate your prayers for the success of this project. **UN**

This first appeared in the *United Church of God-British Isles National Announcements* March 29. Updates will follow.

Pastor Travels Through French-Speaking Africa

by Joel Meeker

From mid-January through mid-February I made a pastoral trip through Ghana, Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Rwanda.

My flights from the States to Ghana had me change planes in London. Since I had a long layover, I was able to have coffee at Heathrow airport with Gerhard Marx and John Ross Schroeder, members of the British Isles' National Council. We talked about the recent changes in the British Isles' National Council and discussed the National Council's plans for the future. I was very impressed by the steady commitment and courage of Gerhard and John and National Council members through the difficulties they had recently traversed.

I arrived in Accra, Ghana, 25 hours after leaving home. The next morning I met with three of our pastors in Ghana: Azariah Coffie, Clement Amoako-Atta and Richard Duah. I hadn't seen them in a year, so it was a great pleasure to meet with them once again. They told me of the growth they've had in Ghana since last year, and also of the challenges they are facing. Gasoline prices have doubled in the past months, which has driven the cost of virtually all items sharply up. This has made a tight economic situation even more difficult for our brethren and ministers in Ghana.

After our meeting on Friday morning I traveled by road from English-speaking Accra to French-speaking Lome, Togo. The border crossing went very smoothly aside from an immigration officer who held up my passport and told me authoritatively that my visa had expired and there might be an extra charge to bring it up to date. He was just testing me. When I told him with a friendly smile that he was pointing to the visa for Benin not Togo, and that nothing had expired, he smiled back at me and said I could go...

On TV in Togo

Once at the hotel in Lome, I called Mr. Fiaboe, our deacon, and he and Mr. Kloutsé came by to see me. Prior to my arrival, Mr. Fiaboe had informed me that there was a Christian station in Lome and that he had negotiated two half-hour slots on Sabbath and Sunday afternoon for broadcasts. I had assumed he meant radio broadcasts, and agreed to do them. However, on

negotiated a price of about \$50 for each half-hour program. This cost was covered by the tithes the Togolese brethren faithfully put aside to advance God's work in their country.

Sabbath morning we had Sabbath services at Mr. Fiaboe's home. As I arrived, I was introduced to several longtime church members who had just come to United from Worldwide. It seems that group had officially switched their day of services from Sabbath to Sunday, which was the last straw for the Djromadzi family and a few others. All together six adults and four children were added to the congregation. I added my warm welcome to the ones they had already received, and we had a profitable Sabbath service.

The first telecast was scheduled for 4 p.m., but the manager didn't arrive until after 4:30. He, and our telecast, were obviously on "African time"! As soon as we were ready, he interrupted the program in progress and the cameraman pointed at me, and I was on the air. I spoke for half an hour on the topic of "What Is Your Destiny?" based on our booklet of the same name, offering the French booklet on the gospel of the Kingdom and giving our address in Paris.

After I had finished, the manager and technician asked how they could get a copy of the booklet. We had an extra one and gave it to them before leaving.

Sunday morning we had a Q&A Bible study with the Lome brethren. I answered questions and also gave an introduction to UCG to the new members who had just joined us. I set my laptop on a table and showed digital photos of the new office building in Cincinnati and also of my travels through various parts of Africa. Our brethren were encouraged to see that they were not alone in the African part of God's flock.

I briefly visited the Djromadzis in their home before going back to the studio for the second telecast, which was specifically about the gospel of the

Benin and Cameroon

The next day I took a taxi to the Ogoudélés house in the afternoon so I could spend the evening with the brethren in Cotonou. We had a wide-ranging Q&A Bible



Mr. and Mrs. Allagbé and Mrs. Ogoudélé in Cotonou, Benin. Above, group in Yagoua, Cameroon

study, and I again showed photos of various aspects of the work in the United States and in Africa. By the time we finished, it was past 11 p.m.

In the meantime the taxi driver had decided he didn't want to come back, so Mr. Ogoudélé felt the safest thing for us to do was to go to the hotel on his little Suzuki 90 motorcycle. We had no helmets and I wasn't keen on the idea, but it seemed the least of several possible evils, so I agreed. Since the clutch had gone out, shifting gears was quite an exhilarating experience! Thankfully we made it to the hotel right at midnight, and Mr. Ogoudélé also arrived safely back home.

Wednesday I flew on to Douala, Cameroon. I was a little concerned about arriving in Cameroon. I had had to reschedule this trip from an earlier time, and as a result my visa for Cameroon had expired two days before. An expired visa often means "payday" for officials in Africa. That is, they ask for a large bribe to help "fix" your problem. I had prayed about this prior to arrival, and I was very relieved the immigration official didn't notice the expiration date. I believe our Father intervenes at such times, in large part as a result of the prayers of God's people, and I again would like to thank those of you who pray for us who travel on behalf of God's Church.

That afternoon we visited Emile Banlog at his brother's house. Mr. Banlog, one of the pillars in the Church in Cameroon, had been ill for many months and doctors had been unable to determine the cause of the illness. I had sent an anointed cloth earlier and had asked for prayers on his behalf. As we arrived at the house, I could see that Mr. Banlog's upper body was very emaciated, but his legs were swollen to twice their normal size. I anointed him again and asked God to intervene and heal Emile according to

His will, to lessen his suffering and to comfort him. Emile explained that his wife had taken their two young sons back to their home village so the family could support them, since he was unable to work. I left some assistance with Mr. Banlog to help with medical expenses and with family needs.

Sadly, a week later, shortly after leaving Cameroon, I received the news that Mr. Banlog had died. Mrs. Banlog and the children are in need of our prayers for our Father's comfort and protection.

Mr. Banlog's death is a great loss to the brethren in Cameroon, and all our brethren there would appreciate prayers for encouragement and comfort.

Friday afternoon we had a Spokesman Club meeting, and then in the evening we had an interactive Bible study. After that we enjoyed a meal all together, purchased with funds donated by a member in the St. Louis area.



Joel Meeker meets with interested people in Bongor, Chad

Sabbath we had services at the UCG hall in Douala at 8 a.m. We started early because Moïse Mabout and I needed to begin a trip north to visit other brethren. We had time for some fellowship after services and then headed for the airport.

We flew north to visit brethren in the village of Yagoua. Sunday we were on the road just before dawn for the four-hour drive out to Yagoua. It was the hot dry season in northern Cameroon, so by 8 a.m. we were already bathed in perspiration.

First Visit to Chad

We arrived in Yagoua about 10 and decided to go right to the Logone River, the border with neighboring Chad, and attempt a crossing. Richard Vouroumsia, our contact man in Yagoua, had told us that a group of people in Bongor,

Chad, was forming around some of his in-laws, and had expressed a strong interest in the teaching of the Church of God. They had asked for a visit, and we decided to try to get to them. To my knowledge this was the first visit request we've ever had from this overwhelmingly Muslim country.

We didn't have visas, but hoped we could work something out at the border. The ferry had broken down, so the only way across the river was by pirogue. We were told that the river was low and sluggish, and that no hippos or crocodiles had been seen at the crossing for a whole day, so the short trip would be quite safe. Mr. Vouroumsia, Mr. Mabout and I paid about 50 U.S. cents each for the crossing, which passed without incident.

On the Chadian side we engaged the services of a taxi, an ancient Peugeot 504 station wagon with a broken windshield, and an old driver everyone called "Papa." I found this reassuring. He had lived a long time as a taxi driver, which implied he didn't take too many risks!

We had to pass four checkpoints on the 15-mile trip into Bongor. There were "administrative fees" to be paid at several of them. Mr. Mabout suggested just driving past some of the checkpoints, which one can sometimes do in Cameroon. But Richard and Papa told us somewhat nervously that in Chad, if you don't stop, they start shooting right away. We stopped. At the immigration checkpoint, after some negotiation, I paid about \$8 for a visa stamp in my passport.



We finally arrived in Bongor and drove to the "meeting spot," a space between mud brick houses, in the shade of a tree. About 15 adults arrived and we sat in the shade and talked for about an hour. They asked questions about the Sabbath, and about what UCG believed and on our work as a Church.

They asked if I could help some of them get Bibles and I agreed to leave some money with Richard to purchase some. We also left some booklets in French. They asked me to visit them again the next time I came to Yagoua. I said I would certainly try.

The trip back to the river was like driving past a blast furnace, since a burning, dry wind was coming from the Sahara. We made it back across the river and into Cameroon without incident, and had a visit with members and prospective



Above, the Lome, Togo, congregation; left, Joel Meeker appears on television in Togo

arrival I learned it was actually a television station, and that we were booked for two live telecasts. The station, TV Zion, covers all of Lome, a city of 700,000 people, most of whom have a great interest in religion. Mr. Fiaboe had

Kingdom of God. I again offered the booklet on that topic. As I write this article, we have already begun receiving booklet requests in Paris.

Monday I made the road trip to Benin, arriving in Cotonou right at dusk.

members in Yagoua. They are doing well overall, though they feel very isolated, which physically, of course, they are. They receive sermon tapes and all our literature in French. Several young men are progressing toward baptism. I learned that Richard's mother has tuberculosis, which is common in Yagoua, and they asked for our prayers for her.

The next day we were to fly back to Douala at 8 p.m. but the plane didn't show up. Since the next flight would be several days later, we all had to wait. Mr. Mabout and I found some space on a luggage conveyor belt and got as comfortable as we could. I looped the strap of my computer backpack around my arm several times hoping I would wake up if anyone tried to take it. At 5 a.m. someone woke us all up by yelling that the plane was coming. We were finally able to take off at 7:30 a.m., nearly 12 hours later than the scheduled time. We arrived in Douala around noon.

Wednesday, we drove out to the church-owned field to see how the crops were doing. The members in Douala have planted orange and lemon trees, in addition to banana trees, corn, beans and so on. They have already had one good harvest and are looking forward to receiving more fruits of their labor on

the plot. The funds UCG has provided to purchase this field have been a great help and comfort to the brethren in Cameroon. They are very thankful for this assistance which is helping them help themselves.

Leadership Training in Rwanda

Wednesday night I took off on a six-hour overnight flight to Nairobi. After a six-hour layover in the airport, I caught the next flight to Kigali, Rwanda, arriving Thursday afternoon. On the Sabbath the brethren from the Remera congregation picked me up at 8 a.m. in a bush taxi for the drive up to Giti for services. The rocky, potholed road to Giti had not improved since my last visit, but at least we were in the dry season so we didn't have to worry about sliding down the mountainside. We arrived at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sibobugingo, where the Giti congregation meets. Mr. Sibobugingo showed me a cow he had recently been given by his new son-in-law. In Rwanda custom demands that a suitor must give a cow to the parents of the woman he is to marry.

Over 60 were present for services. I spoke on worshiping God in spirit and in truth. This is an important topic for

Christians in a region where the pervading culture includes much superstition and many occult practices. After ser-

my last trip to Giti. They laughed excitedly as they recognized themselves in the photos.



Members present for services in Giti, Rwanda (photo by Joel Meeker)

vices we took a short break then had a Q&A Bible study for another hour. Then we had lunch: bread, butter, jam, bananas; one egg and one bottle of soda each. To our brethren in Rwanda this represented a treat. Then I set up my laptop and showed photos of the new home office building, as well as photos from

Sunday I had five hours of leadership training classes for Mr. Mundeli, Mr. Sibobugingo and Etienne Rutamunjyanye. These men are the pillars in the Church in Rwanda; I was pleased to be able to spend time with them and to help equip them to better serve God's people in their nation.

Monday morning, I started the long trip home. Upon arrival in Nairobi, I was met by John Elliott. John had just spent two weeks in Kenya and Tanzania with David Baker who was passing him the baton in this part of East Africa. John is a very experienced traveler and pastor, so we're happy to have him join the "African team."

David Baker had been quite sick with an unknown viral infection for about a week. They had feared it might have been malaria or meningitis, both common there, but thankfully it turned out to be neither. When we stopped by to see him, David said he felt up to going out to lunch. We all had lunch with Kurt Hoyer, an old Ambassador classmate of David's and mine, who is a U.S. State Department employee stationed in Nairobi. We are usually alone when we travel in this part of the world, so it was wonderful for the four of us to be together and to be able to discuss how the Church can best be served in the region.

That evening David and John flew out for Amsterdam and I left for London to start the trip home after an eventful and profitable trip. Thank you again for your prayers for God's guidance and protection for those of us who serve in these areas. **UN**

"Portugal," continued from page 6

Sabbath and God's Holy Days. They have requested literature from the Church, and it appears that they are prepared to teach God's law to their congregations. This is similar to what has been happening in other areas and particularly in South Africa. God is really working in amazing ways. We need to pray that this may develop into a growing work in Portugal. Mr. Levy added that there is an *urgent* need to teach the truth in Portuguese. The fields are ripe.

Mr. Levy has a strong knowledge of the truth and his deep convictions have clearly helped him to stay loyal to God's truth through all the difficulties. Mr. Levy was beaming with joy during the hours that we spent with him.

Holy Day in Lisbon

On the next day, the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, we met Jaime Campos and he led us through the narrow roads to Fernanda Duarte's home. Interestingly, my wife and I had met Mrs. Duarte in South Africa many years ago when she came to be with her daughter. My wife actually did the



Sitting: Kathy de Campos, Maria J. de Campos (mother of Jorge), Ana Paula Almeida, Fernanda Duarte, Maria José and Jaime Campos with children Sara and David. Standing: Jorge and Jennifer de Campos

flowers for her daughter's wedding.

Mr. Campos' wife, Maria José, and two children, David and Sara, were there as well. The fourth member of the group of four that meets regularly in Lisbon is Ana Paula Cardoso Almeida. Ana Paula is the other person that we contacted, besides Mr. Levy. She put us in contact with the remaining brethren in Lisbon.

These four brethren and two children, have been meeting regularly at Mr. Campos' home, and lately at Mrs. Duarte's home. They have been listening to Span-

ish tapes from another group. We were planning to get together to listen to some tapes and to address any questions that they had. However, when we got there at 11 a.m. and started chatting and sat down for a meal, we just continued with this meal and an interactive Bible study. The meal and study continued nonstop until we felt it was wise to pack up at 8 p.m. What a lively, lovely and uplifting time of studying God's Word!

They also had many questions about doctrine and "why all these little groups," some questions about United, how United came to be and about our organizational structure. They were encouraged to hear about the work, the truth and United. Clearly these scattered brethren are solid in God's truth and need to be so, to stand alone and stay fully committed. It is so rewarding and exciting to see and talk to these scattered brethren who so badly need fellowship and truth in their own language.

They send greetings to all the brethren, and ask us all to pray for them. **UN**

UCG and Sabbath Church of God Meet Together in Nigeria

Members from the UCG Benin City, Nigeria, congregation traveled to Owerri to meet together with the Sabbath Church of God April 5. The Sabbath Church of God has been interested in United for some time, requesting bulk copies of UCG literature, hymnals and copies of the UCG Constitution.

Peter Aluyi, a deacon in UCG Benin City, gave the sermonette, and UCG member Josef Forson gave the sermon. The attendance was 87, with 62 from the Sabbath Church of God. This number was down because of fuel scarcity.

"There was a lot of joy during and after the service," said Romanus Okere, a leader of the Sabbath Church of God.

Mr. Aluyi reported that the fuel crisis had delayed the UCG group's trip: "The long-awaited combined worship services was a huge success in spite of all the adversary tried to do to botch or bungle the trip with this current acute scarcity of fuel. Instead of 6:30 a.m. departure time from Benin City, it turned out to be

8:45 a.m., because our driver slept at the fuel station over night and later succeeded in filling his tank at about 8 a.m."

In spite of the delay, the brethren were patiently waiting. "They were all filled with joy on seeing us," Mr. Aluyi said. "We immediately commenced the UCG worship services format in which they heartily participated as they now have enough of our hymnals to go round all of them. They listened very attentively to our sermonette and the main message with many of them taking notes as well."

"After this, they entertained us with fried rice and soft drinks. After some fellowshiping we started back."

Earlier, on March 1, Mr. Aluyi and Israel Idelia had visited and observed the Sabbath Church of God's services. At that time there were 145 in attendance.

Arrangements were made for Fred Kellers, UCG senior pastor for Nigeria, and Todd Carey to visit on their trip to Nigeria in late April. We hope to have a report on that trip in the next issue. **UN**

Zambia Visit; Afrikaans Booklet

In April, André van Belkum, chairman of United Church of God—Southern Africa, visited two churches in the Mumbwa province of Zambia. Overall the attendance of the two congregations was around 94.

Because of the rain, the vehicle he was traveling in got stuck on the way to Mumbwa and had to be towed out by oxen.

Mr. van Belkum also made a new contact with a government official in Lusaka (the capital of Zambia) who

now is attending UCG there.

Booklet Available in Afrikaans

UCG—Southern Africa also announced that the *Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God* booklet has been translated into Afrikaans. Afrikaans is spoken by many people in South Africa. This booklet is now available on the Internet at: www.ucgsa.org/afrikaans/geloofstellings.htm. **UN**

13 Members Baptized in Malawi

by Bill Jahns

We are thankful for the continued growth of the United Church of God in Malawi. My wife, Cheryl, and I completed a trip to Malawi in February and I went again in April.

Many have started to attend the congregations in Lilongwe and Blantyre in the last few months. Several have never had contact with the Church of God before and they are anxious to start obeying God and

learning more about God's way. This is amazing, since just a few years ago only Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone Chonde were attending United.

On Feb. 8 and 9, eight people were baptized. Five more members were baptized in April.

Also, work is starting on a well which will benefit those who do not have close access to water there. **UN**



Gordon Kolowilo, Andrew Luwanja, Brighton Chakhaza and Dick Chonde were baptized April 5; inset, Latitha Mapinda was baptized April 6

GN Radio: The Important News Behind the Headlines

by John LaBissoniere

"The important news behind the headlines" is the vital theme of an exciting facet of the work of God today—*The Good News* radio program. Having first debuted on Aug. 12, 2000, over 50 programs have since been recorded at the home office radio studios in Cincinnati. The broadcasts, which cover an extensive array of biblical, current-event and prophetic topics, are expressly designed to convey the sparkling truth of God's Word to willing listeners throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Gary Petty, pastor of the San Antonio, Texas, congregation and a former professional television and radio broadcaster, travels to the home office every two months to tape six to eight programs. Mr. Petty not only hosts each 27-minute program, but prepares the outlines and scripts.

The programs, which often include one or two guests, cover informative and enlightening topics in a vigorous, thought-provoking and challenging style. Many guests are long-time ministers who have authored booklets or articles in *The Good News* or in *World News and Prophecy*, or who have specialized biblical or secular knowledge on significant contemporary issues and problems.

During the past 33 months of broadcasting, 19 United Church of God ministers have been guests on the programs. They include Gary Antion, Scott Ashley, Jerold Aust, Bill Bradford, Howard Davis, Robert Dick, Roger Foster, Jim Franks, Don Henson, Noel Hornor, Tom Kirkpatrick, Ralph Levy, Darris McNeely, Steve Myers, Melvin Rhodes, Randy Stiver, David Treybig, Larry Walker and Donald Ward.

Peter Eddington, operation manager of Media and Communications Services, has directed the recording of master tapes of the programs using state-of-the-art digital recording equipment. Clay Thornton, recently hired as video editor and producer, will now be taking on this responsibility.

Each program is then carefully edited into three nine-minute segments. Included in the audio-editing process is the addition of attention-grabbing commercials, which offer listeners a free subscription to *The Good News* or various booklets. These are recorded and inserted between segments and at the beginning

and end of each program. Gary Antion, Peter Eddington, David Evans, Tom Kirkpatrick and others have served as "voices" for these important 60-second promotional messages. The completed programs are then duplicated onto compact discs and later sent to the radio stations.

To add excitement and interest to a variety of programs, special bulletins and world news updates are periodically recorded by David Palmer, pastor of the Vancouver, British Columbia, congregation and a former commercial radio announcer. Galen Morrison, a former professional broadcaster who currently manages his own media-purchasing firm and serves as an elder in the Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation, also records these stimulating two-minute news insets.

Building a Radio Audience

For the United Church of God, weekly radio has proven to be an excellent means of preaching the gospel in various large and small media markets. It is providing UCG with a growing base of interested listeners who not only receive our publications, but are in some cases progressing towards baptism. Although it takes time to build a radio audience, close to 6,500 individual responses have

so far been received.

The cost to add a new *Good News* subscriber is higher through radio than through print media or the Internet. It is nonetheless a valuable ingredient in our overall advertising strategy. Having a presence on the airwaves provides widespread and positive exposure for the name of United, for our Web site and our many publications.

In addition, those who respond from radio are frequently higher-quality subscribers than those who respond to some of our print promotions. This is because they may have listened for weeks or even months prior to calling to request literature or seek counseling. Also, they may have frequently visited our Web site. By the time they ask for *The Good News* or other literature, they may already have a good understanding of the nature and direction of our publications.

Listeners respond by either visiting our Web site or calling our toll-free media response phone lines which are located at the home office. Our tele-

phone response manager, Laura Peabody, personally handles a majority of the telephone calls. The greatest response period is Sunday mornings. During other times, including late evenings, calls are forwarded to answering machines.

Although many programs have been recorded on numerous biblical subjects, some regularly draw greater response than others. The top-rated program has consistently been "4,000 Years of Christmas." We regularly observe a spike in the number of phone calls on topics having to do with the afterlife, including programs dealing with death or heaven and hell. In fact, three of the top 10 programs, in terms of response, have to do with these themes (see chart).

Gary Petty's remarks at the end of each broadcast are these: "Why were you born? There is a vast difference between grasping the future God wants for you or simply going on the way you have been. The choice is up to you." This question and statement clearly sum up the message of not only our radio program, but the purpose and role of God's Church in the world today. The truth of God, made plain from the pages of the Bible, is placed squarely in front of listeners. A warning to take action is conveyed. It is up to those who "have an ear to hear," to follow through on the significant words of life they have been given.

Making Every Dollar Count

Some brethren may have wondered why our broadcast occasionally moves in and out of various media markets and from one station to another, rather than simply selecting a few stations and staying on them. The reason is the critical need to experiment with, and then analyze, important market fundamentals. These elements include radio formats, dayparts, airtimes, power (wattage), audience ratings and media markets.

Businesses that advertise on television and radio must carefully determine which stations appeal to their potential clients and customers. We must essentially do the same with our program. We accomplish this by testing various market dynamics. Our goal is to determine the best combination of factors that will maximize listener response and produce the lowest cost per response. It generally takes 13 to 26 weeks to judge if these characteristics, working in synergy on a particular radio station, will produce effective results.

More than 13,000 radio stations are licensed to operate in the United States. Each station chooses a format that appeals to specific groups of listeners. Formats include adult contemporary music, adult standards music, classical, country, gospel, jazz, news/talk, oldies, religion, soft adult contemporary music, sports, urban and many others. During the past 132 weeks of broadcasting we have tested nine different radio formats in many media markets.

Our testing has found that talk and news/talk formatted stations give us an edge by targeting a knowledgeable and responsive audience. Listeners tuning to news/talk stations are generally conservative and are often keenly interested in

learning and keeping up to date on current events, rather than simply being entertained, as is often the case on music-formatted stations.

In a May 15, 2002, press release, Scarborough Research reported that 22 percent of American adults 18+ listen to news/talk radio. Over 1,700 talk and news/talk radio stations are currently broadcasting in the United States. This means there are numerous opportunities

have experimented with traditional Sunday morning airtimes as well as weekend evenings and Saturday and Thursday mornings and Wednesday afternoons. Our testing has found that Sunday mornings between 6:30 and 9:30 a.m. and Saturday evenings from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. are optimal dayparts for our program.

Another factor we test is the broadcast power (wattage) of various stations.



Darris McNeely makes a point while recording a *Good News* radio program with Ralph Levy and host Gary Petty (photos by Peter Eddington)

available for us in many media markets.

The news/talk format also holds an advantage for us over stations with a religious motif. Although religious formatted stations have a targetable audience, according to an authoritative radio report, many of them do not have a large listener base as compared to secular formats. So far we have tested 10 religious format stations, none of which have pulled significant response. We do plan to perform additional testing in the future however.

Also, in attempting to purchase airtime on religious-oriented stations, we are regularly forced to "jump through several hoops," including being interrogated on our doctrines, sending more than one demonstration audiotape, submitting our statement of beliefs and sending several samples of our literature. Most secular radio stations, whether news/talk or music formatted, have few if any such requirements. Often they don't even request a demonstration broadcast to review. In most cases, these stations are simply interested in making certain we are a good credit risk and will pay our bills.

Speaking of credit, as media buying agent, I regularly point radio station account executives to our Web site to view our radio log. It helps them to see that our program airs on a number of well-known, powerful stations. After submitting a credit application, we are generally approved within a day or two. This allows us to take swift advantage of sometimes highly competitive airtime buys.

Along with testing formats, we have also tested various segments of the broadcast day (daypart) to determine which ones would produce optimal results in terms of listener response. We

We have tested several 1,000-, 5,000-, 10,000- and 25,000-watt stations and a number of 50,000-watt clear-channel AM stations in the evenings after dusk. While many stations are required by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to reduce signal strength after sunset, some 50,000-watt stations are authorized to continue operating at full power. At night, their signals can often reach a dozen or more states and into Canada and Mexico. Currently there are 16 stations on our radio log, five of which operate on 50,000 watts of power. You may view the complete station lineup and the program schedule on-line at www.ucg.org/radio.

Through *Good News* radio, United is carrying out its vital task to preach the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. We are attempting to reach as large an audience as possible with the limited funds currently available. As always your ongoing prayers for God's blessings for the success of the radio program are greatly appreciated.

Critical Point of Contact

The radio stations currently airing *Good News* radio have been carefully selected and tested. Many have generated outstanding response week after week. For instance, WREC 600 AM in Memphis, Tennessee, and WIBC 1070 AM in Indianapolis, Indiana, have consistently produced excellent response. We continually seek other stations that will generate similar results.

With this in mind, we recently added several new talk or news/talk stations to our radio log. For example, the program began to air on 43-year-old talk station KFMB 760 AM in San Diego, Califor-

See "GN Radio" page 16

GN Radio Top 10 Programs

Program Title	Times Aired	Total Response	Average Response
4,000 Years of Christmas	3	293	98
What Happens After Death?	6	548	91
Ghouls, Ghosts, Goblins and Halloween	1	84	84
Will I Go to Heaven?	4	334	84
A Journey to Hell	6	438	73
The Coming European Superpower	4	270	68
The Spirit World	4	240	60
Managing Finances	1	57	57
Is the Bible Relevant?	6	336	56
Why Evil?	2	109	55



From the Word

What Christians Need to Know About Sexual Abuse

■ What is sexual abuse?
Why is it so devastating?
What are its effects? How
long do the effects last? How
can victims recover or even
heal from the trauma?

by Helen Richards and John Cafourek

Television, radio, newspapers and newsmagazines are full of stories about sexual abuse. Priests or ministers abusing congregants, rape by strangers or by dates, even parents abusing their own children are some of the horrifying news grabbing today's headlines.

What is sexual abuse? Why is it so devastating? What are the effects of it? How long do the effects last? Can victims recover or even heal from the trauma? In this article we will examine this deplorable scourge. In addition, we will look at what is involved in the arduous process of recovery from sexual abuse.

Definition of Sexual Abuse

The term *sexual abuse* covers a wide variety of inappropriate sexual behaviors and actions. It includes a vast realm or spectrum from so-called "victimless" crimes as voyeurism (peeping) and indecent exposure to child molestation, incest and rape.

Voyeurism and indecent exposure may not seem, at face value, to be sexual abuse, but they are often the "gateway" acts that start an offender on a path that leads to the more serious ones. To include the whole gamut of offenses, our definition of sexual abuse must be broad. Sexual abuse occurs when one person invades the physical or psychological space of another without consent or performs sexual acts on the victim. As a result of this invasion, the victims suffer physical or psychological harm or both.

One prevalent myth that surrounds the crimes of sexual abuse is that the offender is acting out of *sexual* needs and desires, and that the goal of these actions is *sexual* gratification. Research indicates that for most offenders, however, the primary motive is power. The offender has a compulsion to overpower and control another person. For some offenders, the motivation is intense anger toward women and a desire to wreak vengeance for real or imagined wrongs. The offender does not view a victim as a real person, but as an object to satisfy the need for power and control.

Scope of the Problem

How pervasive is the problem of sexual abuse? How many people are affected by it? According to statistics compiled by the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), there were 261,000 victims, aged 12 or older, of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault in 2001. One out of every six American women, or a total of 17.7 million

women, have been a victim of either a completed or attempted rape in their lifetime. Ninety percent of American rape victims in 1999 were women, while 10 percent were men. Three percent of all American men (about 2.78 million) have been victims of sexual assault.

Almost half (44 percent) of rape victims are under age 18. Seven percent of girls (aged 5 to 8) and 3 percent of boys (aged 5 to 8) reported that they had been sexually abused. This figure increases in the 9- to 12-year-old age group to 12 percent of girls and 5 percent of boys.

These figures, as shocking as they are, do not tell the whole story. Crimes of sexual abuse are highly likely to go unreported. Many victims believe that they are somehow at fault for the abuse and are full of shame and guilt. Also, many fear reprisal if they report the offense. Again according to RAINN, only about 28 percent (less than 1 in 3) of actual rapes and sexual assaults were reported to the police. Among children the statistics of silence are even greater. Of children in grades 5 to 12 who had been sexually abused, 48 percent of the boys and 29 percent of the girls told no one, not even a friend.

Since the likelihood of capture, prosecution and conviction diminishes the longer the time between the assault and the report, keeping silent allows the abuser to continue to abuse without fear. Some researchers estimated that only 5

The victim cannot stop thinking about the assault, no matter how hard he or she tries. The memories invade sleep in the form of terrifying dreams, which prompt many victims to avoid sleep. In many cases, the victim relives the experience through flashbacks—intensely vivid mental images, which cause the victim to believe that the assault is happening right at that moment. Things, places, situations and feelings that remind the victim of the assault often trigger these symptoms.

For example, a woman who was raped by a man in a blue jacket may start to feel fearful whenever she sees a businessman in a navy blazer. Additionally, victims may experience bodily symptoms (racing heartbeat, rapid breathing, sweating and dizziness) when they encounter mental or physical reminders.

Three months after an attack, a rape survivor expressed these feelings as quoted in the Texas Department of Health *Advocate Training Manual*, 1994. "Sometimes I think the feelings are more intense now than they were at first. I was on the trolley and two guys came and sat down across from me. They looked like the two that raped me. I could almost feel like I was being grabbed again. I just have to keep thinking intellectually it won't happen, but my gut reaction is so intense . . ."

In response to this fear, the victims begin avoiding those things that remind

With time and therapeutic support, the symptoms can fade and the victim can reorganize his or her life along more normal lines. Sometimes these symptoms do not arise for months or even years after the event. Children, especially, repress the troubling memories and only begin experiencing the effects in adulthood.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

If a child is being sexually abused, his or her normal behavior may change. He or she may become depressed; have trouble sleeping or eating; or become angry, withdrawn, anxious and afraid. He or she may be afraid to be separated from you and cling to you.

Experts look for two other factors that often indicate, when they occur together, that sexual abuse is occurring: (1) Sexual preoccupation (or knowledge that is inappropriate for the child's age) and (2) physical complaints, such as rashes, headaches or stomachaches that have no medical explanation.

If your child tells you that he or she has been abused, say you are glad he or she told you. Do not pressure the child, but draw him or her out with careful questions. Tell your child that you believe him or her—fear of parental disbelief often keeps children from reporting abuse. Case notes have shown that few children lie about sexual abuse. Tell your child that the abuse was not his or

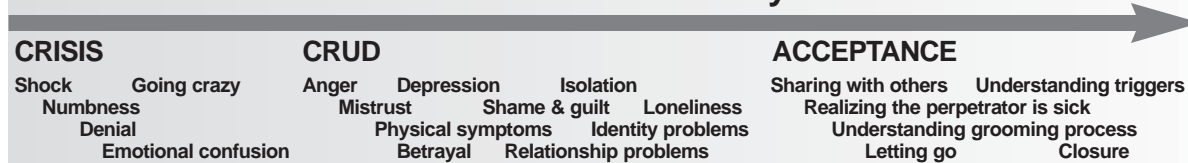
sion. However, the "coaching" Tommy was receiving was not related to softball. After two years of special attention, Tommy was devastated to see his beloved coach turn away from him and begin to spend time with a younger boy.

Tommy seemed to recover from his disappointment, but two years later, he began getting into trouble in school. He was expelled for fighting and then charged with assault. He was sentenced to a counseling program for boys in trouble. During the individual sessions, he confided to the therapist what his coach had done. Charges were brought against the coach (a prominent person in the community).

Tommy and his family were outcasts in their small town. Tommy went through several years of acting-out behavior. At the age of 15, he attempted suicide twice. His parents were grief-stricken and guilt-ridden. They blamed themselves. Tommy's mother became clinically depressed. After many years of therapy and hard work, Tommy graduated from high school and started working.

Sexual assault of adults is a violent, vicious and traumatic attack. The perpetrator, whether known to the victim or not, is acting out of a need to overpower and control. Thus, he or she is willing to use whatever force is necessary to achieve that purpose. The victim, having the advantage of being an adult,

Sexual Abuse Trauma Recovery Process*



percent of all rapists ever spend any time in jail for their crimes: 19 of 20 do not.

Effects on the Victims

The effects of sexual abuse differ depending on the age of the victim, the type of abuse (whether it is rape or childhood sexual assault) and the severity and duration of the abuse. The psychological symptoms resulting from violent assaults fit the diagnostic criteria of Acute Stress Disorder and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

These two syndromes are clinically very similar. The former defines symptoms that arise within two days of a traumatic event and last no more than four weeks after the event. The latter diagnosis is used either when the symptoms arise some time after the precipitating event, or when the symptoms of Acute Stress Disorder last longer than four weeks.

The root cause of the symptoms is the intense fear generated by the assault. The victim persistently reexperiences the abuse in the form of recurrent and intrusive memories, dreams and flashbacks.

them of the trauma—refusing to talk about the event and attempting to avoid thoughts or feelings associated with it; refusing to participate in activities or going to places that remind them of the assault; and withdrawing from normal activities, people or feelings. Many victims believe they will never have a normal life with a career, marriage and children. In addition, victims often exhibit increased arousal, startlingly easily. They are often more irritable, bursting into rage more quickly. They may have great difficulty sleeping. Concentration suffers, and the sufferer is often in a state of heightened vigilance, constantly on the lookout for danger.

It is important to note that these symptoms are the body and mind's *normal* fear responses to extremely threatening situations. War veterans, firefighters, police officers and kidnap victims are only a few examples of people who experience these symptoms as a result of their exposure to life-threatening incidents. The fear responses are natural defense mechanisms designed to protect us from extreme danger.

her fault. Make it clear that you do not blame the child, as most children will feel guilty about what happened.

You may want to have your child examined by a doctor. Try to find a doctor who has had some experience dealing with abused children and who will be sensitive to your child's feelings. You may also need to contact the local authorities to report the abuse. In many areas, professionals (such as a doctor who examines your child) are required to report sexual abuse to the authorities.

Differences Between Adult and Child Sexual Assault

The following is a case history of a sexually abused child. Tommy was an outgoing, cheerful, fun-loving 6-year-old boy. He showed interest and ability in sports, so his conscientious, dedicated parents enrolled him in a city-sponsored softball team. Tommy's coach was well-respected and a successful coach. He took great interest in Tommy, praising him and singling him out for much attention. He scheduled private coaching sessions with the parents' permis-

knows that the rape is what it is—an attack and an isolated incident. The trauma is overpowering and difficult to heal from, but the adult has the ability to begin to deal with it as soon as he or she chooses to face it. For children, however, healing may not begin for years, sometimes even decades after the abuse. This is because of the mental and emotional immaturity of the child *and* the method of attack that child abusers often use.

Abuse of children is done most often by someone they know, even someone they trust. The assailant "grooms" the victim, gradually building a friendship with the child. Slowly, by degrees, he (child abusers are mostly male) begins exposing the child first to "innocent" touching and then progressing to more sexualized activities. At each step, he reassures the victim that he won't hurt the child. By so doing, he overpowers the child's natural reluctance and fear.

This results in a host of confused and conflicting feelings in the victim. On the one hand, the child feels physical pain, fear and rage. But these feelings are

soothed away by the accomplished molester and “explained away.” On the other hand, the attention lavished on the victim makes the child feel special and loved. All children have the need for these feelings to be satisfied. The abuser twists these natural emotions into a means for him to get his own needs met at the expense of the child’s well-being.

To add to the victim’s confusion, the acts themselves may be physically pleasurable. They may feel good, but the child feels ashamed or “dirty” because on a deep level he or she knows that the acts are wrong.

Additionally, the child receives a mixed message about trust. The abuser is often someone the child should intrinsically trust—a family member, a teacher, a coach or a neighbor. The child ought to be able to feel safe around such a person, but the acts bring pain. So, what is the message the child receives? “This person says I can trust him not to hurt me, but he is hurting me. So there is something wrong with me. If this person who is supposed to protect me from harm is actually harming me, who can I trust to protect me?”

Considering the complex and contradictory emotional fallout of childhood sexual abuse, it is understandable why a child’s mind seeks to protect itself from this pain. The feelings are overwhelming. The mind often represses the memories and feelings until adulthood when the person will cognitively be more able to deal with it.

Even in adulthood, however, the intense pain and feelings can devastate the individual. The adult has an enormous task to heal from the abuse. He or she must deal with the memories and flashbacks, feel the pain and anger and acknowledge their effects on his or her life, and face the feelings of shame, guilt and self-blame that accompany them. Survivors of childhood sexual assault experience a mourning phase in which they grieve for their lost innocence and happy childhood. Other challenges on the way to recovery include learning to trust again and developing healthy interpersonal boundaries.

Secondary Victims

Crimes of sexual abuse involve more than the perpetrator and victim. They spread out their tentacles like an octopus to include the parents, siblings, friends, mate and potential mates of the original victim. Support, or lack of it, can help or hinder the victim’s recovery from the trauma.

Family members have strong emotional reactions to the assault. They are distressed that the survivor has been injured and may be fearful that the injuries are permanent or life-threatening. They are also very angry at the perpetrator for injuring their loved one, at the survivor for not “fighting hard enough” or being “careful” enough and at themselves for not preventing the attack or not being “protective” enough.

Family members can also feel a desire for revenge against the attacker. They may even act on this desire. Family members often feel guilty that they were not able to protect the survivor. Relatives and friends feel a great sense of loss for the survivor, themselves and the family. A common feeling is

that “things will never be the same.”

Spouses and potential spouses experience these emotions too. They also may believe some of the myths about rape and sexual abuse. They may not be able to recognize that these crimes are not about sexual relations but about anger, power and control. Therefore, spouses may feel that adultery has been committed and the sanctity of the marital relations has been violated. Many survivors experience sexual difficulties after their attack, which the spouse often interprets as rejection. Because of these factors, the divorce rate among survivors of sexual assault is quite high.

Additionally, adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse have great difficulty in developing and maintaining normal, healthy intimate relations with spouses, especially after they have begun to process their experiences. The stresses on the relationship while the survivor is healing can often be overwhelming to the relationship.

Many times family members may fear to accept the truth of the sexual abuse. This often happens in cases of incest. The nonoffending parent may fear the breakup of the family, and out of that fear will refuse to believe the child’s report. This is particularly true in instances where a wife may fear that she will lose her husband if she acts on what her child is telling her. She may accuse her child of lying about the abuse or discount the report in some other way.

Another situation where parents may refuse to act occurs when one sibling abuses another. Whenever a victim is disbelieved, or worse, accused of “making it up,” the trauma is magnified. This is called “secondary wounding.” As a result of this wounding, the victim suppresses the memories. When the victim finally begins the healing process, he or she must also be healed from the secondary wounding.

The healing process takes time but can with patience and love resolve into stronger, happier relationships. For that to happen, all family members must be educated to the effects of sexual abuse and assault and be committed to provide the support and encouragement each needs for the family to heal.

Biblical Examples

Sexual abuse is not new. It has been perpetrated since the beginning of recorded history. The Old Testament of the Bible contains three specific instances of sexual abuse. The first incident is described in Genesis 19:30-38. This case involved Abraham’s nephew Lot and two of his daughters. The daughters initiated incestuous relations with their father, perhaps in the mistaken belief that the entire world had been destroyed (this occurs shortly after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah) and they were the only humans left on the earth.

The second incident is described in Genesis 34. It involved the rape of Jacob’s daughter, Dinah, by Shechem the Hivite. In this case, the Bible makes it clear that she was raped. “Now Dinah the daughter of Leah . . . went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and

violated her” (Genesis 34:1-2).

Clearly, the emotional reactions of family members toward a rape victim have not changed down through the millennia. When Jacob first heard that his daughter had been defiled, he waited until his sons came back from taking care of the herds in the fields. When Dinah’s brothers heard about the rape, they “were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob’s daughter, a thing which ought not to be done” (Genesis 34:7).

In the meantime, Shechem had asked his father to arrange a marriage between him and Dinah. He offered to pay as dowry anything Jacob and his sons required. Jacob’s sons, however, wanted vengeance. So they lied to Shechem and his father and demanded that the entire city be circumcised. Shechem and his father agreed to this condition. After the city had complied with it, Simeon and Levi, Jacob’s sons, attacked the city, killed all the men and took Dinah back with them. The rest of Jacob’s sons plundered the city and took all its wealth. Jacob remonstrated with his sons because of their actions, but they defended themselves by saying, “Should he treat our sister like a harlot?” (Genesis 34:31).

Jacob, apparently, was willing to overlook the rape of his daughter to keep peace with the Hivites. He responded like many family members of sexual abuse victims who turn a blind eye to the reality of the abuse to avoid confronting the abuser. His concern seemed to be more for how his sons’ actions would impact his relations with his neighbors than for his daughter.

No doubt the punishment exacted by Jacob’s sons was excessive. And, to be sure, there were other issues involved. However, the emotional reactions of Jacob’s sons were the same as many family members of abuse victims today. They were angry, distressed and wanted to avenge their sister’s honor.

The next account concerns the rape of Tamar, King David’s daughter, by her half-brother, Amnon (2 Samuel 13). Amnon desired Tamar, and he devised a scheme to get her alone with him in his house (2 Samuel 13:1-10). Once there, he asked her to lie with him. She resisted and even told him that if he wanted her, all he had to do was ask their father. She told him that King David would allow them to be married if Amnon requested. She begged him not to rape her (2 Samuel 13:11-13). This passage shows that she did not consent.

The next verse shows that Amnon’s goal was not honorable. “However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her” (2 Samuel 13:14). Clearly, he was only interested in forcing his will on her. The law of God states that if a man seduces a virgin, then he is to pay the bride-price and marry her (Exodus 22:16). However, once Amnon had forced Tamar, he rejected her and ordered her out of his house. Tamar begged him not to reject her saying, “This evil of sending me away is worse than the other that you did to me” (2 Samuel 13:16).

Clearly, Tamar attempted to follow God’s law, but Amnon was not willing to

do so. His aim was to force Tamar to do as he willed. His motivation was to have power and control over Tamar—the same motivation driving sexual abusers.

Tamar’s reaction to this attack is also typical of sexual abuse victims, with allowances for cultural differences. She tore her clothes and put ashes on her head (signs of mourning) and cried (2 Samuel 13:19). After telling her full brother, Absalom, what had happened, she stayed secluded and depressed in his house. Many victims of a sexual attack withdraw from their previous activities and from associating with other people. The Bible does not record what happened to Tamar after that. She may have stayed in isolation for the rest of her life,

Victims need to hear that they can recover. They need to know that they are not alone and that others have not stopped caring for them.

or she may have recovered.

King David was “very angry” (2 Samuel 13:21), but he took no direct action. Absalom was also extremely angry. He hated Amnon (2 Samuel 13:22). Amnon’s rape of Tamar set in motion events that led to his own death at the hand of Absalom (2 Samuel 13:23-39) and ultimately to Absalom’s attempt to usurp his father’s throne. David’s inaction allowed Absalom to have the opportunity to feel angry and embittered toward his brother. Absalom chose to use his desire for revenge as an excuse for committing murder. He also felt anger towards his father for failing to protect and avenge Tamar. He allowed himself to brood on these wrongs and become so embittered that he felt justified in overthrowing his father.

God’s Instructions to Prevent Sexual Abuse

God created sex for two main purposes: reproduction and love between a husband and wife. Sex is reserved for the marriage relationship only, and the Bible upholds virginity and abstinence outside of marriage. Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18 forbid adultery. The penalties were very strict. Both parties were to be put to death (Leviticus 20:10). Betrothal was considered as binding as marriage, so if a man had sexual relations with a betrothed woman, the penalty was the same as for adultery.

God also put hedges around relationships within families. In Leviticus, chapters 18 and 20 list in detail those relationships with which sexual intimacies are forbidden. They include fathers and daughters, sons and mothers, sisters and brothers, grandparents and grandchildren, aunts and nephews, uncles and nieces, as well as the spouses of these relationships. God states in Leviticus 18 that these laws are in response to the practices of the Egyptians who believed that the Pharaoh’s line descended through the female line. Therefore, for father to pass on the office to his son, it was necessary for brothers to marry sisters.

Close intermarriage allows for recessive genetic traits to be more often expressed and passed down. Some of these traits cause disabilities and infirmities with tremendous suffering. By not allowing close family members to marry and have children, these traits do not appear as frequently. Also, having sexual relations between close family

members blurs the boundaries between the roles of parent/child and spouse.

Parents are supposed to protect their children from harm, not exploit them to fulfill their own desires. Parents are commanded to raise children who love and obey God (Deuteronomy 6:1-2, 7; Ephesians 6:4). A parent who violates the laws of Leviticus 18 is clearly not obeying these commands. A family member who violates these laws is also failing to uphold the God-ordained roles of the family. The parent’s role is to teach, guide, nurture and protect children until they are able to be fully functioning adults. If a parent steps out of that role into that of a sexual partner, the child’s ability to enter into a healthy adult rela-

tionship with a mate and into a healthy relationship with God is severely hampered.

Much additional information is available on the subject of sexual abuse. Many Web sites offer both information and help. However, it may be wise to search out Web sites that are sponsored by reputable national organizations. Protection of privacy and assurance of safety and emotional well-being are important considerations. A list of helpful Web sites might include www.rainn.org and www.human-nature.org/ as well as many other sites. The first-mentioned of these, the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, is the nation’s largest anti-sexual assault organization. RAINN operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE and carries out programs to prevent sexual assault, help victims and ensure that rapists are brought to justice.

Sexual abuse is not the victim’s fault. It is the responsibility of the abuser. If you know someone who has been sexually abused, you can help by offering support to the victim. Victims need to hear repeatedly, “It wasn’t your fault.” Victims need to hear that they can recover. They need to know that they are not alone and that others have not stopped caring for them. They especially need to understand that God still loves them. And, finally, they need to understand how to break the sexual abuse trauma cycle to further the process of emotional and spiritual healing. Our final article in the series on abuse will address breaking the cycle of abuse.

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**This process can be a cycle if not brought to full closure.*

Modesty in Dress: A Vanishing Virtue (Part 2)

■ Last issue we looked at the pervasiveness of immodest dress and the challenges this poses for those of us striving to live godly lives. This article identifies godly principles to consider in our clothing and appearance as Christians. A sermon further addressing this is also being planned.—*Youth Education Team*

by Jim Servidio with contributions from Colleen Winner

How do we know what's hot and what's not? It's all around us. "Sexy clothes for sexy men," says one ad. Movies, posters, TV, billboards, magazines and catalogs show men and women with the look—the style the fashion industry is pushing. In order to appeal and sell, the industry is always looking for something more daring, more sexy, for both guys and girls.

"My family and I recently spent a day at Busch Gardens, in Williamsburg, Virginia. The young ladies visiting the attractions were often dressed in ways that, frankly, would lead people from other countries to conclude that roughly 20 percent of our female population is engaged in prostitution.

"A bikini top with shorts was common attire (even on very overweight girls), which is bad enough but does not fall into the 20 percent. No, another little fashion touch adds salaciousness: Many of the girls we saw had opened the button on their very short, hip-hugger shorts and pulled the zipper about halfway down. With their shorts unzipped and forming an arrow to their privates, and a bikini or tube top, they walked about as unself-consciously as you like."

Columnist Mona Charen related the above personal experience in an article she wrote for *Jewish World Review* May 4, 2001. Her blunt observation is startling. Unfortunately, similar stories could be told about how young men are choosing to dress as well. Many people today take pride in teasing or tempting with their bodies, but are outraged if they receive negative attention. Though it is often done in the name of personal freedom, many teens and adults are unwitting slaves to today's fashion industry.

Part 1 of "Modesty in Dress: A Vanishing Virtue" highlighted how our contemporary trends have little regard for modesty. Today's wardrobe seems to have almost no limits or boundaries. Sensual exposure is thought of as merely fashion by both male and female, not as an issue of right or wrong. A growing number in society believe you can look revealingly sexy, and also portray innocence at the same time. Being sexy, many boast, doesn't mean you have to have sex. What an increasingly confused age in which to live, or rear children. What is missing in our society? Part 2 will highlight what God expects of us.

Getting Out the Ruler?

What can be done to help maintain, or reestablish, a sense of modesty and puri-

ty? Should someone decree what young and old, male and female should wear? Countless debates could ensue over how low a neckline can extend, how long skirts should be, how fitted is too fitted, whether someone's hair is too long or too short, how many buttons on a guy's shirt should be left unbuttoned, etc. Getting out a ruler to measure hair or skirt lengths has produced conflicts and strife in families and even within congregations for as long as most remember.

Surely, there is a means by which Christians can arrive at a unified and acceptable standard. We recognize there is a clear call for modesty in God's Word: "In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in *modest* apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing" (1 Timothy 2:9, emphasis added throughout).

Likewise, both male and female must have concern that our behavior and dress are not offensive or indiscreet (Romans 14:21; Titus 2:5). God designed clothing to cover, not draw attention to, the sexuality of both men and women (Genesis 3:21; Leviticus 18). Yet when we look into the Bible, there doesn't seem to be much help in defining specific limits. How can we determine what is modest, and what is just being up-to-date? As with all subjects, we must begin with a foundation.

The Heart of the Matter

On one occasion the disciples of Jesus were concerned with the issue of forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-22). They asked how many times they were required to forgive an offending party. They wanted to establish an exact number. However, Jesus taught them that the place to begin was with their attitude. He said, in essence, they must be men who have a forgiving spirit in their hearts before they think of limitations.

On another occasion a lawyer asked Jesus to help him define the term *neighbor* (Luke 10:29). This man wanted to know the precise number of steps from his home it would take to reach the end of his "neighborhood." Again, Jesus reflected on matters of the heart when He replied with the parable of the Good Samaritan.

A third illustration concerns the Sabbath. How many countless questions could we formulate on what is proper Sabbath behavior and what is breaking God's law? Debates on how much work is work and how to avoid "seeking our own pleasure" could go on endlessly. Yet the Bible reminds us to keep the Sabbath holy, just as it prods us to be modest. However, there is no long list of do's and don'ts for either. How is one to know what is breaking the Sabbath?

Isaiah 58 teaches us an important principle about the Sabbath and about Christianity in general. Verse 13 says we must, "call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable." In other words, before we begin thinking about exactly what is proper or improper behavior, we must first delight in the Sabbath command. We must call the seventh day honorable and consider it a privilege to have fellowship with God on that day.

The goal is to gain pleasure from complying with God's law. If we do not look forward to the Sabbath or if we consider it a restriction, then we will not necessarily make wise choices in determining proper Sabbath behavior.

The same principle applies to modesty. What is in the heart of a person will always impact decision-making. We must first address matters of the heart. Modesty is an attitude and a way of thinking that exhibits the values by which we live. As part of the Church of God, we agree that our values—our moral standards—should be based on the Word of God. But society (especially the fashion industry and the entertainment media) teaches different moral standards or even that there are no moral standards—that everyone can choose his or her own standard. If modesty is only thought of as someone's specific standard, then there is no advantage to being closer to the standard as opposed to being right on the edge.

While modesty certainly involves a way of dressing for both male and female, it begins with a way of thinking and that thinking affects what we put on. Biblical modesty starts on the inside and works its way outward. As Elisabeth Elliot so aptly stated in *Let Me Be a Woman*, "The fact that I am a woman does not make me a different kind of Christian, but the fact that I am a Christian makes me a different kind of woman." Our society scorns modesty today because a God-oriented perspective is in too few hearts.

A Claim to Godliness

Before we can discuss what may or may not be modest apparel, we have to remember that we have been called to a noble lifestyle. God's people have too important a mission in life to get caught up in harmful, popular trends. We are told in 1 Peter 1:15, "But as He who called you is *holy*, you also be *holy* in all your conduct." God's people, including our children, are invited to live a vision that is truly extraordinary. We are like princes and princesses in training, awaiting our opportunity to rule. If godliness is in our hearts, it will show in all of our life choices.

One facet of a godly mind-set is mentioned in Romans 12:2: "And do not be conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Are our lives demonstrating God's standards or a slide toward patterns of this world? If society is succeeding in persuading us to have a lax attitude toward this world, then we are being drawn away from God by Satan. John warns us, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). God's people must continue to love God above the approval of the world. We cannot allow today's trendy lifestyle to diminish our royal purpose in life.

Clothing Sends a Message

Though God is first and foremost concerned with the inward man, He is also concerned with our outward appearance. Clothes and appearance transmit nonver-

bal signals. The Bible even uses clothing as a metaphor for what we are like inside and for our character. The parable of the wedding supper and the improperly attired guest is one example (Matthew 22:11). Revelation 16:15 is another. Here we are told, "Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his *garments*, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

Also, 1 Corinthians 11 teaches that a woman should have long hair because this physical attribute is a glory to her. A man, on the other hand, should not have long hair. A person's hair serves as an important visible symbol of his or her submission to God's plan of authority and a distinguishing mark between the sexes. God would not inspire these accounts if how we physically present ourselves before Him and the world were irrelevant. Our bodies are the temple of God's Spirit and should showcase the indwelling of that Spirit.

So, what does our clothing say about us? Are we pleasing God with our choice of attire or reflecting the world and its standards via a trendy look? Are we fixated on what we have on? Do we sometimes feel uncomfortable because we know that our clothing is evoking sexuality? *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines "modest" in reference to clothing and dress as "decent, pure, not displaying one's body." Clothing that is too tight or revealing on either a male or female violates the intended use of the body God gave us.

Dannah Gresh, in an article in *Christian Parenting Today*, Winter 2002, says she helps girls understand how the male mind works by teaching them about the Gestalt Theory. She relates how graphic designers employ this theory to control the length of time a person looks at an image by using an incomplete image to draw the viewer's attention. Completing the incomplete intrigues the human brain, so a person will always pause to finish the unfinished picture.

When a male sees a girl walking down the street (or at a church function?) wearing tight fitting or suggestive clothing, his mind will want to "complete the picture." A low-cut blouse, a tight T-shirt, a long slit in a long skirt or other suggestive or scanty attire are just enough of a peek at the body to cause a guy to "finish the picture."

As people reflecting purity and godliness, we do not want members of the opposite sex to have to "finish a picture" we have helped create. Christian men will train themselves to "bounce" their eyes elsewhere, but they should not be tempted and have to do so. Of course, many in society blithely welcome such invitations and entertain a host of assumptions about anyone dressing in a sensual way, whether male or female. It is wrong for us to don clothing that brings our morals and discretion into question and invites others to treat us with less respect. A maturing young lady soon learns that God has granted her a certain power with her body. Her feminine allure must always be used in a dignified manner.

Though God looks on the heart, we can see that what we wear is critical. The choice of how to look and what to wear remains an individual decision funda-

mentally. However, most people don't consider it odd if a school or corporation establishes a dress code. So it should not be thought of as legalistic if a church, which promotes godly neatness, modesty and holiness, should communicate general dress standards for church services or related functions. When done, it is not for the purpose of restricting personal choice, but to reflect our standards and to properly represent the God we serve. We should all come to the understanding that some clothing is not befitting for church.

As we've seen, the biblical standards on modesty don't give specific limits and need to be interpreted and applied to today. How do we interpret these principles? The Church, ministry, members and parents are all involved in this challenging effort in one way or another. We have to make judgments according to our society and culture in the light of God's Word.

One area where the United Church of God has established a dress code is at United Youth Camps. To be accepted, campers and staff must sign an agreement acknowledging that "short shorts, midriffs, halter-tops or wearing revealing or other inappropriate apparel (or the lack thereof) will not be allowed" (2003 Camper Application Form). Established by consensus of the camp team, these are reasonable guidelines reflecting modesty in the camp environment.

Sensible Solution

So, how do we counter the trend toward indecent attire and make suitable choices in dress? The first step is to reconfirm our love of godly values above popular style and chic trends. We can then note and emulate other Christians who are respected for their maturity and good judgment in grooming. Finally, we can comply with established guidelines set for the occasion, while remembering the principles of 1 Peter 3:3-4 that our real beauty is to be the inward person.

We all understand that proper hair lengths and clothing do not produce holiness automatically, but holiness will result in suitable clothing and appearance if coupled with proper education and wisdom. All immodesty is not the result of a wrong spirit. Often it is simply a lack of knowledge. However, with education, when a person's heart is right, he or she will want to dress with appropriate decorum and modestly. Applying the points mentioned above should help insure no one's look will be unbecoming, inappropriate or embarrassing.

Immodest appearance disobeys God's command, puts us at risk, brings our character into question, tempts others and devalues ourselves. Responding to God's call to be holy and represent His Kingdom battles against the crude and vulgar in society. It helps maintain a healthy view of others and ourselves. It also sends a message that we should be respected and treated honorably.

Thankfully, there are still those who respect godly values and understand that modest dress is always cool and never out of style. In a society where few are heeding the call to modesty, let's make sure we continue to respond to God's instructions so we can demonstrate the standard that will soon come to this earth. **UN**

Fellowship Pitfall: When Sharing Can Hurt

■ Do we serve others when we publicly share an unproven doctrinal idea? Or is this a time for restraint in our fellowship?

by Graemme Marshall

Here in the 21st century we face a barrage of religious videos, tape ministries and journals. Anyone with access to the Internet can participate in a bewildering storm of doctrinal ideas.

How Can We Maintain Christian Balance?

Since the drastic doctrinal changes and splintering of our former fellowship several years ago, some groups now allow a freewheeling doctrinal discussion as part of their Sabbath or social fellowship. This model runs counter to our historic practice. Some say our tradition is too old-fashioned, that there should be more freedom. Yet still today, an environment of unfettered sharing of "ideas" is unsettling for many, especially on God's Sabbath day. It is easily understandable why many in United have a sensitivity to "new ideas" being thrust upon them—just consider the last decade!

To be fair, United has modified much. Some of our Bible study formats do allow input and comment. But this isn't intended as an open forum for new or contrary ideas. Many members have a reservoir of memory spanning decades of traditional belief. Public discussion of contrary ideas during Sabbath fellowship can be unsettling and disturbing to them.

It is reasonable to ask whether a Sabbath service is the place to bring up newfound insights from personal research or Internet browsing. Is a sermonette or sermon the place to do it? An individual may be inspired by some newly discovered knowledge, but is fellowship the place to spread it to others?

Let's consider why the airing of new ideas or conclusions can be unsettling at Sabbath services. Now a friendly discussion of an idea along with the relevant biblical evidence is one thing. This is different from an unproven new idea being promoted as truth, despite UCG belief or opposing biblical evidence.

This article is not about expressing positive, upbeat, strengthening insights of our way of life consistent with our shared beliefs. The focus is on unproven ideas contrary to or outside of published UCG teaching.

The Practice of Love

Many of us are not comfortable with feeling pressured to immediately respond to controversial questions. How many of us are walking Bible encyclopedias? Should one really expect anyone off the top of his or her head to be able to answer every question with a thoroughly studied response? United has esteemed unity and peace greater than unrestricted discussion of new ideas. Putting people on the spot publicly can upset Sabbath fellowship. Some may respond that being controversial makes others think more. Paul counseled us not to promote disputes, but instead godly edification (1 Timothy 1:3-4).

Servant leadership serves the needs of others. A pastor strives to serve all and is keenly aware of the complex

makeup of a congregation. In the spirit of Paul saying "to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews" (1 Corinthians 9:20), a pastor strives to spiritually nurture all ages, educational levels and backgrounds.

Does airing a questionable idea strengthen a "little one"? A more loving way, surely, is to submit new ideas to the ministry for doctrinal review.

Since it is love that endures, applying what we already know can be more important than the pursuit of endless knowledge for learning's sake. Ecclesiastes 1:9 reminds us that "there is nothing new under the sun." Many resurfacing doctrinal issues were actually addressed long ago by Herbert Armstrong and others in Church leadership.

Can We Be Sure of Christ's Approval?

How can we know we're a recipient of special revelation? Surely our "new idea" or doctrinal insight would benefit from a review and approval by a consensus of the ministry. We may also have to consider what part ego might play in a desire to claim a "new idea." We have to be truthful about it.

One way to test this is by following the established processes. If we feel God may have revealed something to us, then we can share it with our pastor. If he thinks it may be valid, then together we can share it with the Doctrine Committee for eventual GCE acceptance. (This is the UCG process, and of course other groups may have their own processes.)

Difficulty can arise if our idea or conclusion isn't accepted. We are then confronted with what to do about it. Are we willing to give up promoting our

"idea"? Are we willing to put it on the shelf? It may be that our insight is not wrong, but perhaps is not understood or accepted at this time. Can we accept this and commit it to Christ? Harmony with God is what we are after.

Unhealthy Preoccupation?

Scripture shows a preoccupation with new truths can be spiritually unhealthy.

Paul warned that the winds of doctrine would blow through our lives (2 Timothy 4:3-4; Ephesians 4:14). Could the pursuit of new knowledge be too close to the approach of the Athenians of Acts 17:21 who "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing"? Perhaps the time could be better spent trying to serve others than in hours accumulating unproven ideas.

What Is Good Christian Discussion?

The Bible Reading Program (www.ucg.org/brp) is an excellent study that provides new insight into old biblical passages. Even if you think you know all there is to know about the Bible and have heard it expounded many times, yet with God's Holy Spirit active within you, old passages can bring fresh insight and meaning. This approach leads to Bible ideas and doctrinal discussions that edify others.

Most welcome in any congregation is newfound insight or research on child rearing, adolescence, dating, romance, marriage, health, aging, stress and change, family, world news and trends, ways to preach the gospel. Bible study aids, discoveries that reinforce Scripture, ways to serve, positive Sabbath keeping or how to be closer to God.

How to Present a New Idea

Most have trusted friends with whom they can discuss the pros and cons of an idea before deciding if it is worth presenting to the ministry. Their pastor can help them decide if it is worth writing up to present to the Doctrine Committee.

One way to present your insight or conclusion is to outline why it is better than any given so far in UCG literature. In presenting your idea, know what UCG has published and show why yours is a superior explanation.

When Paul counseled, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40), we have good advice for initiating anything new. Should this stifle growth? Does it mean United is too stuffy and staid? The bottom line surely is whether our freedom in Christ justifies expressing things that can weaken the faith of others (1 Corinthians 9:19).

In our Church history there have been good examples of how to handle new understanding. New insight was handled by committing it to the Church government. It was left there until the Christ-inspired leadership came to similarly understand. In the intervening time the new insight wasn't spread about nor preached. This upheld current beliefs, maintained the faith and didn't weaken others. With eventual acceptance, the new insight brought due rejoicing.

This works better for producing peace and harmony and agrees with Paul who said, "Stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). **UN**

A Volunteer Story: Everyone Benefits!

by Linda Wasilkoff

When my children were still young, I was able to do volunteer work in their elementary school. My responsibility was to help teach students reading skills. It was gratifying to see many who were struggling with the concept of reading finally "get it"!

As my children got older, I spent a day a week in their high school helping with the band program. Later on I had the opportunity to be involved in a Block Watch program. These volunteer efforts were important to me because they gave something back to our community.

Helping in the Office

Just over three years ago, a different volunteer opportunity came my way—that of working in the Canadian National Office. Several members have mentioned that they would love to be able to do this. Of course, commuting from British Columbia or Newfoundland might prove to be a bit of a problem!

Since not everyone can have the opportunity of helping in one of the Church's offices, let me share some of

the joys and challenges of doing so.

One of the first challenges is answering the phone. A person never knows who is on the other end or their reason for calling. It can be someone irate that they are "still" receiving the magazine when they asked that their subscription be canceled. Usually a little reassurance that it will be taken care of—that the last issue was already in the mail before the cancellation was received—is enough to make the end of the conversation more pleasant than the beginning.

Usually, though, the calls are very positive, with people very grateful for what they are receiving. One lady was so excited about our literature, she called every few days to ask if it had been mailed yet and to request more!

Several people have expressed that they would love to be able to help with God's work. Actually, there are a number of volunteers across Canada (and other countries) who have saved the Church a lot of money by their efforts. The Church has set up programs that rely upon the work of individuals and congregations to help spread the gospel, and these programs are bearing fruit.

If you would like to be a volunteer for the Church, here are some of the ways you can be involved.

GN Newsstand Program

This involves making arrangements with a store, mall or plaza to have space to put a newsstand (either a free-standing or counter display). It then requires monitoring and refilling as needed. Currently we have several members across Canada distributing hundreds of magazines this way and have added many subscribers to the magazine as a result. Many are involved in the United States and other countries as well.

Waiting Room Program

This program puts the magazine in waiting rooms for people to read while they are waiting! There are three ways this is done in Canada. One is done from the Canadian office. We mail a sample copy to waiting rooms. Members have worked to help reduce our mailing costs by calling waiting rooms to ask if they would like to have a copy of the magazine. This eliminates many who would not be interested and so reduces our

postage costs. Another approach is for a member to personally visit waiting rooms to ask if they would like to have a subscription. In both of these scenarios, the members (or congregations) work with the National Office to be sure that they aren't calling on offices that have already been approached.

Each week a handful of the tear-out cards from the waiting room editions come in from individuals requesting their own subscription. So thanks to some of you, our magazine is not only becoming more recognized, but we have more subscribers at a fairly low cost.

Though U.S. waiting rooms that didn't renew were recently eliminated, new interested waiting rooms are still being added.

Brochure Distribution

This program is a bit less costly than distributing magazines. We have an attractive trifold brochure promoting the magazine. Members can arrange for them to be distributed by using our small display stands in stores. Or, even easier, members can post them on bulletin boards where permitted. They are small enough to be carried around in a purse or briefcase. Those areas where this is being tried are seeing results.

Good News Cards

GN cards are the size of postcards—in fact they are postcards. Anyone who picks them up can request a subscription to *The Good News* by mailing in the card. Members can use them much the same way as the brochures. They are easy to put up on any bulletin board in a shopping area or perhaps a Laundromat.

Gift Card Program

Several congregations are involved in this program. Members can fill in a card to send a gift magazine to a family member or friend who might be interested in the magazine. On average about 10 percent of those who receive a sample magazine request a subscription. The others have at least seen what we have to offer.

These programs have produced some good fruit and have helped our advertising budget go farther. I believe that they are as important or more important than sitting in the office answering the phone! If you would like to help, contact your pastor. Or, if you are in a remote area, contact the office. The staff will be most pleased to "give you a volunteer job." It will be one of the most rewarding volunteer experiences you have had. Who knows if God will use your efforts to call someone into the Church! **UN**

Is There a Worldwide Work to Be Done Today?

■ A look at the reasons some feel we don't need to do a worldwide work can actually help us strengthen our zeal to accomplish that work.

by Erik Jones

There are people, believing the same core doctrinal beliefs we do, who believe that there is no worldwide work to be done today. They believe that "the gospel has been preached," that "we just preach the gospel by our examples now" or "all we have to do is a local work." Is there any truth to these statements?

Let's look at three common reasons used by some who don't believe an organized effort to proclaim the gospel to the world is necessary and then look deeper into what the Bible says on this subject.

Reason 1: "There's No Worldwide Work to Be Done Today"

Some people feel we only need to be concerned with doing a local work. Those who believe this typically are in independent groups and see no need to be part of anything bigger than themselves. After seeing abuses in the past, many are wary of the thought of authority and organization.

Is just a local work what Christ would have wanted?

One of the most well-known statements of Christ is found in Matthew 28:18-19: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (emphasis added throughout).

In Matthew 24:14, Christ dogmatically states, "And this Good News about the Kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all people; and then the end will come" (Good News Bible). We must not let our familiarity with these verses diminish their power. They clearly say that the work of preaching the gospel is to be done on a global scale and must continue to be done until Christ returns.

Christ's direct command to us, as His people, is to make sure His truth gets to all people in the world, according to His will.

Christians are people who live "by every word of God" (Luke 4:4). The Bible (God's inspired Word) commands the people of God to make the "preaching of the gospel" their number one mission. Remember, Christians will not be judged by merely having the truth—they will be judged on what they did with it (Matthew 24:46). Paul believed he would spiritually be in trouble if he

neglected preaching the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:16).

If we all just did local works in our local autonomous congregations, we would be limiting our ability to preach the gospel to the whole world. If we only preached locally, how would the message get to areas that don't currently have local congregations? It takes a united effort by God's people to proclaim the gospel throughout the world, wherever God opens the door. This is why we need organization and leadership.



Of course, local congregations should do all they can as well. The waiting room, newsstand and brochure programs are excellent ways to strengthen the work of God in your local area.

Reason 2: "Herbert Armstrong Finished the Work"

Some may read this and nod their heads in agreement but say, "Herbert Armstrong was God's apostle, and at his death the work was finished. Didn't Mr. Armstrong believe he would finish the work?"

As a matter of fact, as some of his last coworker letters show, Mr. Armstrong himself did believe the work was to continue after his death. (He died in 1986, after more than 50 years of serving the Church of God.) But beyond that, as we have already seen, the Bible says Christ would be with the work until "the end of the age." Prophecy assures us that the gospel

will go out to the entire earth, "and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). Mr. Armstrong has been dead for 17 years. The "end of the age" has not occurred yet. Therefore, Mr. Armstrong did not finish the work of preaching the gospel to the world. Just as Jesus, "finished the work" (John 17:4) of His physical life at His death and ascension, Mr. Armstrong finished his part in the work at his death. If the death of Jesus Christ didn't finish the work, how could the death of Herbert Armstrong finish the work?

converted and know God's truth? Millions of people have been born since his death (and millions who lived during his time never heard the true gospel message)—these precious people prove that the work of God is to be done today! Prophecy shows that the work will be completed by the two witnesses (Revelation 11:3-12), but in no way indicates that it is not to be done between the death of Herbert Armstrong and the advent of the two witnesses.

Reason 3: "We Preach the Gospel by Our Examples"

Another common reason for neglecting to preach the gospel around the world is the idea that our personal examples completely fulfill the work. Is this God's definition of preaching the gospel?

What does the Bible teach regarding how the gospel is to be preached? The book of Acts is important because it serves as our model for how the Church should act.

The second chapter of Acts shows us that on the Day of Pentecost a minister, one of God's leading apostles, literally stood up and proclaimed the gospel to the people in Jerusalem at

ately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (verse 20).

In Acts 14, we read of Paul and Barnabas visiting various cities such as Derbe where they "preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples" (verse 20-21). In verse 22 we read of the apostles returning to cities to strengthen the brethren and ordain leaders. This shows us that the ministry is also responsible for caring for and overseeing the Church. Acts 16:4-5 shows that decisions made by the council meeting at the headquarters church of Jerusalem were binding on all the congregations—showing that the New Testament Church was not composed of local autonomous congregations.

These scriptures, and many others, show that the work is fulfilled primarily by God's ministers preaching it to the general public.

That should in no way minimize the importance of our personal example, which does have a role in the work of the Church. We are commanded to let our "light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Today, the United Church of God's main tool to get the gospel out to the world is via the printed word. Since God decided to record His words of truth via the printed word, it is fitting that we strive to powerfully use the printed word to preach the gospel, while seeking to also make effective use of radio, television, the Internet and other new means of communication that are developed.

The Work Today

Our work is bearing fruit. People are being converted as God sees fit to call them.

The Good News reaches nearly every nation on earth with the good news of God's coming Kingdom. Thousands of booklets are printed each year to explain God's truth in more depth. We also use radio, television and the Internet to preach the truth. As technology advances, God may provide more methods for this gospel to go out to the world. But if all else fails, God can always use stones (Luke 19:40)!

Just because we don't see thousands being converted today, it does not mean that we should abandon the work and declare it "over." God's people are characterized by having vision, and we continue to do the work and zealously pray that God will bless it and call whom He wills. We pray that God will help us all rekindle the fire of zealotness for the work and band together to fulfill this commission!

The greatest work of God still lies ahead for the multitudes of people who have not yet heard His message! UN



God's work is being done around the world in many languages, in places as varied as Singapore and Nigeria

At his death, Mr. Armstrong's part in the continuous line of God's work on earth was complete. But the line was picked up by those still alive and continues to this very day and will continue on until Christ returns.

Would the great God of love and fairness leave the people after Mr. Armstrong with no opportunity to be

that time. As a result of Peter's bold proclamation, 3,000 people were converted to God's way of life (verse 41).

In Acts 3, we read the story of Peter and John going to the temple and healing a lame man (verse 7). As a result of this miracle, attention was drawn to Peter and John and people gathered around them (verse 11). A door was opened for Peter to open his mouth and preach the gospel to the people there (verse 12).

In Acts 5, we read of an angel breaking the apostles out of prison and instructing them to, "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life" (verse 20).

In Acts 6, we read of the apostles appointing deacons to handle local congregation business, so that the apostles could focus their time on "the ministry of the word" (verse 4)—the preaching of the gospel!

In Acts 9, we read of the conversion of the apostle Paul and see, "Immedi-

End With a Bang!

In any public speaking class, you will be taught to end your message "with a bang"—with a strong conclusion. The end of your message tells the audience exactly what you want them to do with your speech.

It is interesting that the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke all end with Christ giving admonition to preach the gospel. Mark records some of Jesus' last words on earth as, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Some of Christ's last words in the book of Luke are recorded as, "Thus it is written . . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47). Matthew's gospel ends with direct instruction to preach the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). The book of Acts, which continues where Luke's Gospel ended, begins with instruction to preach the gospel "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Obviously, Christ chose His parting words very wisely so we (as His followers) would know exactly what to do in His absence. UN

Lessons From Babylon: God Is Still in Charge

■ The ancient city of Babylon provides a reminder that men's flawed systems and governments will give way to God's mastery of world events.

by Jay Turner

The ruins of the ancient city of Babylon are located inside the borders of the modern nation of Iraq. They are an enduring testament to God's ultimate mastery of world events, and of the inexorable unfolding of His plan for mankind. And it was in Babylon that God revealed Himself to the ancient world as the Most High God.

More than 500 years before the birth of Christ, God sent the armies of Babylon to punish the nation of Judah. Daniel and his three friends were taken as captives to serve in the royal court of Babylon. God was at work in all of this. He orchestrated events to reveal Himself and show how He works in history.

An impressive dream

God gave King Nebuchadnezzar of

Babylon an impressive dream, and imbued him with a deep suspicion of his advisors; such that the king demanded that his advisors tell him both what he had dreamed and what it meant. King Nebuchadnezzar knew that anyone could spin a pretty story out of a dream—but only someone in touch with genuine supernatural power could reveal *what he had dreamed* and its true meaning.

God used this challenge to expose the astrologers and soothsayers of



God predicted a series of world-ruling kingdoms of progressively baser character, which would all, in the end, be swept away and replaced by a divinely established kingdom that would rule the world forever (Daniel 2:28-45).

Babylon as frauds, and to reveal Himself and to show who His true servants were. God gave Daniel the knowledge both of the dream and what it meant. Daniel told the king that it was the God of heaven who had given the king rulership over the great realm of Babylon, and that God was revealing an outline of history through the dream. God predicted a series of world-ruling kingdoms of progressively baser character, which would all, in the end, be swept away and replaced by a divinely established kingdom that would rule the world forever (Daniel 2:28-45).

As Daniel reminded King Belshazzar, his ancestor Nebuchadnezzar quickly forgot this object lesson, and continued on his path of turning into an egotistical tyrant (Daniel 5:18-21). God gave him another vision to urge him to repentance (Daniel 4:27) and to drive home the point that it is the Most High God who rules over the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:17). Nebuchadnezzar's descendants also held the God of Abra-



The ruins of ancient Babylon serve as a reminder of God's control of world events (photos © 1999-2003 www.arttoday.com)

ham in contempt, and so God handed down judgment and overthrew the kingdom of Babylon (Daniel 5:22-31).

God gave Daniel a vision (Daniel 7) in which Daniel was shown the same sequence of world-ruling kingdoms, and was shown that in the end God will once again sit in judgment of these great governments. God will sweep them away and turn over rulership of

the world to His servants (Daniel 7:13-14, 18, 27). We can see that not only is God in charge of world events, He is working to a specific plan.

In this present evil age (Galatians 1:4), "the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 John 5:19). Satan sways almost everyone in this age by virtue of having deceived the whole world into following him. Thankfully, God is in charge and limits what Satan can do (Job chapters 1 and 2).

Peace Will Fill the World

We live in a world of satanically deceived nations. It simply isn't in our power to establish lasting peace and justice. God promises that He will take care of it—and only He can do it.

The day is coming when God will send an angel to drag Satan off to prison and turn rulership of the world over to Christ and the saints (Revelation 20:1-6). That is when the kingdoms of this world will come under the rule of the Kingdom of God (Revelation 11:15), and justice and peace will fill the world. For now, it is our part to prepare to be part of God's government, and to comfort the victims of the injustice in this world. And we ought to be praying, "Thy kingdom come!" **UN**

My Service Was a Waste!

■ Have you ever felt that what you tried to do to serve others turned out to be a waste? It's easy to get weary doing good. Is it really worth it?

by Janet Treadway

Have you ever felt that your service to someone was a waste? Or that you were not appreciated? Or that everything you did to serve someone or help in a service project was totally forgotten? Or worse yet, that people found fault with everything you did when you were trying to do good? You ended up feeling like you were kicked in the teeth.

If I could ask for a show of hands of how many of you felt your service was unappreciated at some point, I would imagine most of you would be raising your hands and raising them high. Does that mean we should throw up our hands and say, "No more"? I have felt that way many times. But is that the solution—to just stop serving and getting involved?

I was once involved with a project that required staying up all night for several nights, only to go to work the next day totally exhausted. The next year someone else had been given part of my responsibilities without anyone ever talking to me about it. What had I done wrong? It made me feel so unappreciated for the hours that I had put into that project, and I became very discouraged. (Somehow it doesn't occur to you at a time like this to be thankful for the reduced workload.) I wondered why I even wasted my time when I was so eas-

ily replaced. In the depths of my struggles I made a promise to myself that I would never get involved again with anything. I never wanted to hurt like this again. The hurt was too high of a price.

Where Were the Other Nine?

Christ was faced with the same problem—lack of appreciation from those He reached out to help. He did much good, He served many people, fed thousands, blessed children, healed the lame, gave sight to the blind and healed many of their sicknesses. But how many came back to express appreciation? How many actually turned on Him instead? In Romans 1:21 it says, "Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."

The story of the 10 lepers that Jesus healed helps to illustrate the point of ingratitude. "Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood far off. And they lifted up their voices and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!'" (Luke 17:11-13). In their deepest need they cried out to Him for help.

"So when He saw them, He said to them, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests.' And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said,

'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?' Then He said to him, 'Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well'" (Luke 17:14-19).

Jesus healed 10 and only one came back to express thanks. The others forgot, did not know to or did not have the time to express their gratitude. It's a reminder to us to show appreciation for those who serve us.

How many of the people Jesus healed and helped were there to support Him when He faced His greatest trial, that of dying on the cross?

What Should We Do?

But what should we do when we feel our service has been wasted?

Part of the answer is that we sometimes have to examine our own reasons for serving. Naturally we want to receive recognition and appreciation, but that's not the purpose of serving that Christ taught. Christ taught a standard of service that seeks no recognition from men (Matthew 6:1-4). This Christ-centered service helps us become more like our Heavenly Father, and is focused on really helping others.

We should keep giving and hoping that our lives will touch others and make a difference in their lives, even in the face of rejection and even if our good deeds are forgotten. Although men will forget our service, it will never be forgotten and unappreciated by God!

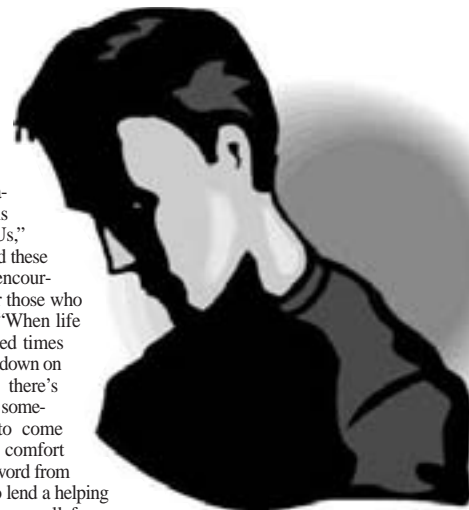
Hebrews 6:10 says, "For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love, in which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

In a recent country hit song by the group Alabama, "Angels Among Us," you will find these words of encouragement for those who give hope: "When life dealt troubled times and had me down on my knees, there's always been someone there to come along and comfort me, a kind word from a stranger to lend a helping hand. A phone call from a friend just to say I understand. Ain't it kind of funny at the dark end of the road, someone lights the way with just a single ray of hope."

Just like those mentioned in the song who do good, we too can be instruments of God for good. We continue to offer a ray of hope in people's lives even though it may not be appreciated and may even be forgotten. We become very thankful to those who offer us a ray of hope when we are down and discouraged. We do not forget the good that has been done for us! Most of all, we express that gratitude to them and to God.

Keep on Doing—Anyway

While going through my own discouragement, I heard a message about the Paradoxical Commandments that turned my broken heart around and helped my attitude change to a more



positive approach to service. The Paradoxical Commandments by Kent M. Keith show the importance of doing the right thing, no matter how others react. Here are a couple of them:

People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered. Love them anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you have anyway.

You may find more information at www.paradoxicalcommandments.com.

We may feel unappreciated or at times thrown away, attacked or kicked in the teeth, but we should do good anyway. We practice the example of Jesus Christ. Even though His good deeds were forgotten by many, He died for all of us anyway! **UN**

Courting Compromise: Myths About Dating Outside the Church

"There is no one in the Church for me to marry!"

How many times have singles or teens looked around their local congregations in despair? There may not be someone to date in their local area, let alone marry. Some start dating outside the Church. And why not? There are many decent, honest people in the world, goes the theory, and if that person truly loves me, he or she will accept my religion.

Unfortunately, it rarely works that way. Dating outside the Church isn't as simple or as consequence-free as one might think. There are a number of myths surrounding this subject that need to be examined. Why shouldn't you date outside the Church? And how can you cope if marriage is not in your foreseeable future?

Myth #1: There is no one in the Church for me.

Just because you have not met a suitable person in your area, does not mean there isn't anyone at all. Look at the example of Elijah—he thought he was the only one left who was faithful to God (1 Kings 19:14-18). But God said He had reserved 7,000 others. A lack of singles in your area doesn't mean there are no other singles.

If marriage and family are very important to you, ask yourself: Have I really tried to get to know all the singles in my area? Not just in my congregation, but in my surrounding province/state or country? You may need to look beyond your immediate area. Once you've done this, leave the rest to God.

It becomes dangerous to start creating your own solutions to your loneliness. In Genesis 19:31, Lot's daughters used this very myth to take matters into their own hands: "There is no man on the earth to come in to us." Although this is an extreme example, it does show how far we are willing to go to justify taking matters into our own hands.

Myth #2: If I want a spouse and children, I have to marry outside the Church.

There is no guarantee that you will be able to have children. What if in desper-

ation to have children you married outside the Church, only to discover you or your spouse are unable to have children? If you still did not have children, how would you feel about your choice then?

If you did have children, consider the difficulties of raising them in a religiously divided household.

Myth #3: If the Church were bigger, I wouldn't need to look outside.

No matter how big the Church gets, there will always be an excuse to look elsewhere. There will always be nice people sitting beside you at school and work. Remember this: Satan knows your loneliness and your dilemma. Do you think he wouldn't take every opportunity to exploit that? Satan knows exactly whom you would be attracted to and he knows exactly how to get your attention in this area—even before you do. His goal is to take you out of the Church, so do not underestimate him. Putting God's way first, not your own, requires much faith and strength (2 Corinthians 5:9-10, 15).

Myth #4: If you do not get married right now, you might miss out.

Miss out on what, this life or the next? In Romans 8:18, Paul says, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." In Matthew 19:29, Jesus tells us that "every one that hath forsaken . . . wife, or children, or lands, for my name sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (KJV). God will take care of you. He will not test you beyond what you can handle. You are not the first person to be in this position, and you will not be the last. Hebrews 11:35-40 says that many have had fiery trials and difficulties.

Marriage is a desirable thing, but it is not to be desired more than what it fore-shadows: the relationship we will have with Christ. It is not a prerequisite for life or for the Kingdom. It may be hard to believe, but in the long run it won't matter that you did not marry right now. This physical life is only fleetingly temporary.

But temporary doesn't always seem short. Imagine making the wrong choice about a mate. Try to comprehend the rest of your life with double hardships, sorrow, grief and unhappiness, all because you relied on yourself instead of trusting in God.

Marriage may be your goal, but it might not be what God wants for you at this time in your life. Maybe the time isn't right for you—or maybe the time isn't right for the person God has in mind for you.

Myth #5: God will call my unconverted spouse/fiancé/fiancée/close friend.

God is under no obligation to call your mate, especially if you deliberately choose to marry outside the Church. Sometimes God does indeed call unconverted mates, but it is not the norm. There are many members who have attended for years, even decades, whose spouses have not been calling or have not responded to a calling.

If you think God is calling the person you're interested in, don't rush into anything. Wait at least a year or two to test the fruits. You probably wouldn't date an alcoholic just because he had joined Alcoholics Anonymous. You'd wait and see if he stuck with it.

An Unequal Yoke

A young man once lamented that he tried everything he could to open the eyes of his girlfriend to see the truth. After all, he had proved the Sabbath day and diligently showed her everything he had learned about the Sabbath. Desperately he tried to share his newfound knowledge, even reading the scriptures out to her, but to no avail. Unconverted people do not appreciate God's way of life (1 Corinthians 2:11, 14). They are of this world and even though they might be interested to come to services once in a while, eventually, when presented with more appealing activities, they drop away.

Reality often sets in when your friend or spouse resents your religion. They see how it consumes you in Bible study, in

prayer, in Sabbath activities and tithing, which is often the biggest issue of all. These may not seem like a big deal now, but they will when your spouse asks what and who comes first in your life and possibly asks you to choose between him (or her) and the Church.

Trying to keep worldly practices out of your home becomes an all-consuming balancing act. After all, it's your spouse's home too! Try juggling God's festivals and your mate's practices of Christmas, Easter, Halloween, etc. And then there are the day-to-day issues: toppings on your pizza; the lobster at your anniversary dinner; and the quality of your TV viewing, just to name a few.

These things inevitably strain relationships, even the very best. Satan doesn't have to guess how to pressure you to sin; he actually knows the very holes in your armor. Your unconverted spouse may be a tool Satan may use virtually every single day of your life. This will put a strain on your marriage and may pressure you to compromise.

People outside the Church live off of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, whereas you are striving to live off the tree of life. Simply put, you are not equally yoked. Paul wrote: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14, see also 15-18).

There is a difference between those who are already married to an unbeliever and those who are seeking to be. In 1 Corinthians 7:12-17 Paul addresses the first group of people. They are already yoked to an unbeliever. This passage contains instructions on how to deal with the situation. It is not saying that it is something to be sought, because verse 39 tells these readers to marry in the Church if they ever get a chance to remarry.

Children are also a consideration. God commands us to teach our children about God's way (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). How difficult would that be with an unconverted mate? Rearing children

requires two people, teaching and training together, as admonished in Ephesians 6:1-4. It becomes very difficult to teach God's way if your spouse has different values and beliefs.

If you have been single for two, five or even 10 years, marrying outside the Church is like giving up on God to provide a mate for you and settling for second best. It's like Sarah getting Hagar to produce an heir for Abraham. But even after Ishmael was born, they had to wait another 13 years for the promise of a son to be fulfilled. How much happier they (and the rest of the world) would have been if they had only trusted God and patiently waited.

God is not unfair, even though it sometimes feels that way. He will not give us more than we can handle, and He promises to reward us for obeying Him. Matthew 19:29 states that we will receive a hundred times over anything that we give up for His sake. Romans 8:18 says our present sufferings (loneliness and lack of a companion or children) are nothing compared to our future glory.

How Can I Cope Now?

Marriage is not the only way you can live a fuller, richer life, growing in character. Volunteer at church to serve seniors, teens or young children. Volunteering in your community teaches valuable lessons and fills loneliness a great deal.

Develop your talents or further your education. (Although developing your skills and personality can help make you a really attractive person who others would want to marry, the benefits go far beyond that.) Use the Feast to travel and meet brethren from around the world. Adopt a Church family to spend time with. It does help to have the empathetic ear of someone in your congregation. But the best solution of all is to pray. Who better than God to help you through the lonely times, and lead you to the right person at the right time? **UN**

The author asked that her name be withheld.

"GN Radio," continued from page 9

nia. Our broadcast airs each Sunday morning at 6 a.m., and we hope to move to a 6:30 a.m. airtime within several weeks.

The San Diego market is ranked 15th on a scale of 276 Arbitron markets. Its metropolitan area population is over 2,800,000. KFMB-AM radio is ranked three out of 27 San Diego area AM/FM stations and has a very good listener rating at this airtime. KFMB has a large broadcast radius including a nighttime interference-free zone that covers the entire San Diego area and reaches as far north as Los Angeles.

Our program also just began airing on 50,000-watt news/talk station KXEL 1540 AM in Waterloo, Iowa, at 10:15 Saturday nights. After dusk, its signal can reach into several midwestern states

and into Mexico and at least four Canadian provinces. We are in line to shift to a slightly earlier airtime as soon as it becomes available.

Another station recently added is 50,000-watt WWVA 1170 AM in Wheeling, West Virginia. The station calls itself "The Big One" since its signal can reach into 18 states and six Canadian provinces after dusk. Our program is now airing on Monday mornings at 12:30 a.m. Although this is not an optimal airtime, we hope to reach a number of "night owls." In fact, we were very pleased when our first airing produced nine responses.

Also added to our station log is 80-year-old news/talk station WSYR 570 AM in Syracuse, New York. Syracuse is the 75th ranked market on a scale of 276 Arbitron markets. WSYR features talk show hosts Rush Limbaugh, Dr. Laura

Schlesinger, Sam Donaldson and others in its daily lineup. In a ranking of Syracuse area AM and FM stations, WSYR-AM is ranked number one out of 19 during this airtime.

Its signal has a broadcast radius of up to 75 miles. It reaches across Lake Ontario into the province of Ontario in Canada. Our broadcast airs each Saturday evening at 10 p.m.

We also have arranged for 15 no-charge, 30-second promotional commercials per week as a run-up to our program. Additionally, we are running a 15-second "tag" at the conclusion of each broadcast. The promotional commercials and the tag, designed to encourage citizens in both Canada and the United States to listen and respond, were prepared by David Palmer, pastor of the Vancouver, British Columbia, congregation and a

former professional radio announcer.

Radio Monitors

How do we know our radio programs air properly on each radio station? United relies on a small army of volunteer monitors who are willing to listen to the programs each week. From coast-to-coast, brethren tune-in during various evenings and mornings, to make sure the program being aired is the correct one, is not preempted, starts on time, is not interrupted by other programming and ends without being cut off.

United has saved hundreds of dollars due to the diligent efforts of our monitors who have reported discrepancies for which we have been reimbursed by the stations. We want to express our special thanks to all the monitors who have served faithfully over the last 2 1/2 years.

Currently the following brethren

serve as volunteer radio program monitors: Marty Turkiewicz for WBN 930 AM, Buffalo, New York; Gene Josephsen for WJMK 104.3 FM, Chicago, Illinois; Robert Teitgen for WKRC 550 AM, Cincinnati, Ohio; Rolland Olmsted for WIBC 1070 AM, Indianapolis, Indiana; Carol Huston for KCMO 710 AM, Kansas City, Missouri; Raymond Epperson for WREC 600 AM, Memphis, Tennessee; Maurice Ledet for WWL 870 AM, New Orleans, Louisiana; Judy Henry for KQV 1410 AM, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Jack Beilstein for WSYR 570 AM, Syracuse, New York; Larry Sharp for KFMB 760 AM, San Diego, California; James Capo for KGMS 940 AM, Tucson, Arizona; Bill and Gayle Baylor for KXEL 1540 AM, Waterloo, Iowa; and Art Gable for WWA 1170 AM, Wheeling, West Virginia. **UN**

"This Is the Will of God"

■ The Bible lists three specific actions we can do that fulfill the "will of God."

by Robert Curry

"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is," the apostle Paul exhorts us in Ephesians 5:17. It should encourage us that Paul said we can know the will of God!

Of course, God gave us the entire Bible as a written expression of His will. Just as an individual prepares his "last will and testament" to dictate to any beneficiaries what their inheritance will be, so God bequeathed us His Old and New Testaments explaining how we can inherit His Kingdom.

An old joke goes, "Where there's a will, there's a relative." With God's will, the result will be glorified sons and daughters in His family! "The reading of the will"—rather than taking place at a special meeting where potential inheritors find out from a lawyer whether they received anything—needs to be something we do daily. In fact, more than just reading the Old and New Testaments, the Bible makes clear we need to study them thoroughly and live them.

For example, let's focus now on three verses in the New Testament that contain the words, "this is the will of God." It's as if God was thinking, "How can I make this so plain they can't possibly miss it!"

All three verses express powerful concepts about God's mind-set, purposes and desires that are vital for a son or daughter of God to practice at all times. All three require diligent and zealous action.

Give Thanks

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you," instructed Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

The lifelong challenge here is to give

month. Nothing like that had ever happened before.

November started off the same numbing way, and we could only joke about how we shouldn't have asked specifically for a "good" renter!

Since I was already preparing this article, I began to surmise that one of the reasons for the trial might be to learn something worth sharing with the



It's hard to always be thankful in the midst of a trial

entire readership. You'll have to judge but I think it's a doozy:

One day Isaiah 58:11 jumped out at me with a comforting promise: "The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought."

Wait a minute! Fire up the flagging faith! This promise was for God's beloved children in drought. And God wasn't frantic to get them out of it! After all, He inspired Peter to state that the "genuineness of your faith," though "tested by fire," is more precious than gold (1 Peter 1:7)—in this case, rental income!

While I had slipped into thinking God wasn't close and involved because there was no renter in sight, actually God was intimately near all along. Can He get any closer than living in us?

And just as Isaiah promised, God was guiding us continually while the house remained unoccupied. When the three prospective renters had applied, I had

are more likely to "say in [our] heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.'"

In the model prayer Christ gave, we are taught to start our prayers by hal- lowing God's name (Matthew 6:9). The next big section asks for God's King- dom to come and His will to be done, on earth as in heaven (verse 10). If we have started our prayers with praising God's name, we have made a good start at being in harmony with God's will.

Men especially should note that the instruction here is more than just being thankful but actually progressing to the point of vocalizing it. We believe we are thankful for our wives and other women in our life and think, since they are noted for their powers of observa- tion, surely they see how thankful we are without us saying anything syrupy, sloppy or downright mushy! Thankful- ly we know from helpful lectures, ser- mons and our women telling us that they need to hear our words of thank- fulness. Truly, when thanks are spoken, they are experienced more fully by both recipient and giver.

When I asked my daughter, Heather, age 11, what she thought of fulfilling God's will by giving thanks, she bub- bled, "I always start out my prayers with thanks to God!" That gives a grate- ful dad something else to be thankful for!

Abstain From Sexual Immorality

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality," Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:3.

Why abstain? Sexual immorality leaves physical, mental, emotional and spiritual stains that we want to avoid. Even though the carnal (fleshly) mind is enmity against God (Romans 8:7) and especially doesn't want anybody telling it what to do regarding sex (Romans 1:28), it still strives to avoid the bad effects that naturally follow from wrong choices.

Even more than being sexually moral to enjoy good results, Paul says we should do it for the privilege of



Self-control also comes through spiritual action—choosing to deny the selfish urges. Though we get tired of hearing it, we must choose daily to avoid TV and movies that promote sexual immorality.

being sanctified—set apart—as a son or daughter of God with a breathtaking future in the family and Kingdom of God.



Doing good includes serving the elderly, as campers in Australia did this year

He adds that we must know how to possess our own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust (1 Thessalonians 4:4-5). How do we acquire this know-how? Godly educa- tional materials motivate us to rededi- cate ourselves to the highest standards of God, which bring fulfilling results.

Self-control also comes through spiri- tual action—choosing to deny the self- ish urges. Though we get tired of hear- ing it, we must choose daily to avoid TV and movies that promote sexual immorality. And now, the powerful evils on the Internet, no longer content just to lurk in the shadows, invade our inbox and sometimes jump right into our faces. Inheriting God's Kingdom is serious business, not to be toyed with or compromised.

As Glen White, United Church of God pastor of Calgary, Alberta, put it so well during a recent sermon in Den- ver, Colorado, "What a waste of time sin is!"

Doing Good

"For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the

anything to help the hungry, thirsty, naked and those in prison (Matthew 25:35)?

Stop reading right now and ask God to help you do something good for somebody. Because somebody you know needs your help now.

In 2 Corinthians 8, the apostle Paul stirred up the members in Corinth by spotlighting the tremendous example of the Macedonians in supplying relief for those in famine in Jerusalem. He pinpoints some key components of the doing-good process. We flesh them out by applying them:

Despite "great trial of affliction" and "deep poverty," the Macedonians "abounded in the riches of their liber- ality" (verse 2). Do we have it that tough? Do we go above and beyond?

The Macedonians did! "Beyond their ability, they were freely willing" (verse 3).

"With much urgency" (verse 4).

What was the foundation of their generosity? "They first gave them- selves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God" (verse 5).

Just as we must actually progress

Stop reading right now and ask God to help you do something good for somebody. Because somebody you know needs your help now.

ignorance of foolish men," says 1 Peter 2:15. In verse 12 Peter explains that we must conduct ourselves honorably among unbelievers, despite knowing they are prone to speak against us as evildoers. Why bother? Peter says because of our good works they observe, they will "glorify God in the day of visitation." If we fulfill God's will now by doing good, many will make up the "great multitude which no one could number" (Revelation 7:9) and fulfill His will by giving thanks!

The great worldwide work God has called His Church to do is really done one person at a time. You, helping someone else. Are we waiting for big deeds when many just need a cup of water (Mark 9:41)? Are we really doing

from being thankful to actually giving thanks, so we must proceed from want- ing to do good to actually doing it. "But now you also must complete the doing of it: that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a com- pletion out of what you have" (verse 11).

For the privilege of being called now and set apart as God's children, we rededicate ourselves to choose each day to fulfill God's will by giving thanks, abstaining from sexual immorality and doing good. Freely willing and urgent about it, we appreciate the blessings that come now but especially later when we inherit the Kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34). UN

Recommended Reading

God gave us the entire Bible as a written expression of His will. The book- let *How to Understand the Bible* looks at keys to learning about and applying this precious gift. See www.ucg.org/booklets to read or download a copy of *How to Understand the Bible* or to request a free copy through the mail.

thanks in all circumstances. Are we really ready for that?

I thought I was prepared when my family returned from enjoying a week of sermons and fellowship celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles in late Sep- tember, basking in a soaring attitude of gratitude, pumped from the messages and full of optimism.

But arriving home, we learned that one of our renters had moved out while we were away, still owing us rent. That hurt, but we dutifully went about the business of looking for a new renter, which usually took one to two weeks. Since it was at the prime rental time of the end of the month, we confidently expected a new and better renter soon.

But quickly September breezed by and then October slipped away with nobody closing a deal. In fact, we only received about three calls the entire

seen His hand in circumstances and dis- cernment, leading us to turn them away. Somehow we were still paying our bills. In sum, we were still living a very abun- dantly blessed life! Now, though still no renter in sight, my soul felt the satisfac- tion God always has available for us whether unemployed, unable to find a mate, battling a disease or whatever might threaten to "separate us from the love of Christ" (Romans 8:35-39).

After learning this important per- spective, I "knew" the trial was soon to end, and sure enough, on the night before Thanksgiving we were blessed with some renters. They appear to be good ones!

Actually it's in the good times that we are paradoxically most likely to neglect giving thanks and forget God. He warns in Deuteronomy 8:11-17 that when we have "eaten and are full," we

Treasure Digest

I Know All That Stuff, So Why Do I Still Need to Study?

You've studied the Bible for years and years. You've read the Bible many times over, so why do you need to study anymore?

Over time, God's instructions and His ways fade in our minds. We live in a world that inundates us in seductive messages, inducements and enticements. We must counterbalance the constant pull away from God and His ways. And we need much more than one sermon a week, if we are to grow.

We need Bible study much as we need daily food (Matthew 4:4). Studying the Bible provides the fuel for spiritual growth—and keeps us strong so that we can resist the wiles of the adversary.

Jesus warned us that the end time would be like the days of Noah and of Lot—reveling in violence and material pursuits to the exclusion of God (Luke 17:26-28). What chance have we of surviving spiritually in such an age if we don't fill our minds with God's thoughts? It's not enough to fondly recollect what food tastes like—we must have some of the real thing regularly!

If Bible study has become dreary for you, ask God to give you a fresh love for His Word. One technique is to study out an inspiring subject—like the healing of the world at the return of Christ. I always have to break out a box of tissues to dry my eyes when I read about how terrible it will be in the tribulation and how wondrous the healing of all of humanity's hurts will be. Reread Isaiah and Revelation, and remember why we are urged to pray, "Thy kingdom come!"

Another technique is to jot down notes about any interesting bits you come across while studying. I have a three-ring binder with jottings in it,



organized by subject. This comes in handy later when I want to study a subject.

Also remember that studying God's Word is preparation for service—it is part of being ready to give an answer to those who ask, and to teach and encourage those God has called.

When you study to be of service to others, your Bible study will be a joy and you'll be guarding your mind against the adversary.

Jay Turner

The Blessing

The Blessing by Gary Smalley and John Trent (published by Thomas Nelson Inc. in 1985) explains the need that children of all ages have for the approval of their parents and how they can suffer by not receiving this. It explains how we can bestow this blessing on anyone we come in contact with, but especially our own beloved children and grandchildren.

The blessing is based on five elements building one upon the other and is backed by examples in Scripture such as Isaac blessing Jacob and Jesus blessing the little children.

Meaningful touch. The symbolic meaning of touch even in today's society is expressed by our granddaughters when they proclaim that they want Grandma to hold them.

Spoken words. A great way for grandparents to do this and to also tie it into the third element, **expressing high value**, is in bestowing your grandchild with a special name, such as "Grandma's Bundle of Joy" or "Grandma's Ray of Sunshine." Both of my little granddaughters know their own special name and call themselves by it quite often.

Picturing a special future. Thankfully we can point our children to God's Kingdom throughout the year and especially at Feast time.

Active commitment. This includes committing our children to God and committing our lives to their best interest. This means being willing to learn their unique needs, talents, abilities and interests and seeing to it that they are able to develop these as fully as possible. Many examples abound of parents who sacrifice for years so that their children can be figure skating champions like Tara Lipinski or Todd Eldredge, for example.

Marilyn Braley



Q&A: My Spouse Is Not in the Church

Does United have any literature to comfort and advise members whose spouses are not in the Church?

I don't know of any specific booklets or articles on that subject. Your best source of comfort and advice would likely come from counsel with your pastor. He knows you and your situation best and may well have met your mate, too. If you have any particular questions or issues, it would be helpful to arrange an appointment with him.

One of the difficulties in publishing articles on this subject is that every relationship and circumstance is unique, making it difficult to offer generalized encouragement. But there are some principles that may be helpful. Three keys to dealing with this kind of situation are communication, respect and example.

Regarding communication, it's important that you and your mate each be able to express what you believe and why it's important to you. You shouldn't try to change each other's minds—that can lead to an argument. But it will relieve the situation of some stress if you can both speak calmly and openly about your beliefs.

Secondly, even though you and your mate have different beliefs, it is important that each of you respects the other and the other's beliefs. A great deal of stress comes into a relationship if either disregards or ridicules the other's beliefs. For example, your spouse may continue to observe traditional holidays (such as Christmas). That may put a strain on you, since you no longer believe in those observances—but it would be unproductive and unnecessarily stressful to try to force your mate to not observe those days. By the same token, he or she can accept and respect your decision to observe the Sabbath and the annual festivals.

The third general principle is your personal example. Peter's instruction is given to wives, but the principle holds true for husbands as well: "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear" (1 Peter 3:1).

Peter points out that the most important thing for you to do in your circumstance is to continue to be the best, most loving, responsive and respectful husband or wife you can (see also 1 Peter 3:7 and Ephesians 5:21). Your mate may well be "won over" by your

conduct because he or she sees that your new understanding and beliefs are helping you become an even better husband or wife.

Along that line, it might also help if your mate has contact with the Church so he or she can become acquainted with the members. He or she may be willing to come to Sabbath and Holy Day services with you occasionally and attend the congregation's social events. Hopefully your mate will see that our pastors and members are friendly, reasonable and "normal" people.

You may also find it helpful to talk about your situation with others whose spouses are not members. They may have specific suggestions and recommendations based on their own experiences.

I respect your commitment to your calling and new understanding. I'm confident God will continue to bless your efforts.

Don Henson

Quotable Quotes

"The best angle from which to approach any problem is the try-angle" (anonymous).

"An idea not coupled with action will never get any bigger than the brain cell it occupied" (Arnold Glasow).

"I hope I shall possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all titles, the character of an honest man" (George Washington).

Anthony Pacelli

"How We Make the Night to Be Much Observed Special"

A reader wrote with this suggestion: "It would be nice if a call went out to the brethren to send in their 'How We Make the Night to Be Much Observed Special.' I am sure there are some wonderful ideas out there—it would be nice if we could share with one another." We'd all love to hear your ideas!

Share Your Treasures!

Do you have any short items of biblical wisdom, humor or practical information that you would like to share in this section? Or if you have any suggestions, please contact *UnitedNews*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027 or mike_bennett@ucg.org.

Letters

No Longer Too Far-Fetched

I trust God is blessing you, and I pray He will continue to. I am renewing my subscription to your *Bible Study Course*; as well, I am sending you a contribution to aid in your efforts toward God's work.

I must admit that years ago I put your literature down. I stopped reading it because I said to myself that what is written in your publication, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, will never happen; it is too far-fetched. Then, with the World Trade Center bombings Sept. 11, it all began to come together and make sense. It is a good thing I had been knowledgeable about your teachings so that I knew where to go for direction.

I now know that your teachings

about the Lord are true and unalloyed as the Word of God says they should be.

As long as I have been contributing, God has been placing prosperity in my hands even though I have no regular or steady job.

California

Wants to Observe Unleavened Bread

First, I want to thank you for the cassette tapes you have mailed me. They are really informative. Also, thank you for all the past help in answering my many questions.

I would like to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. At present I am not a church member, but would like to be obedient to the Word.

My husband is not a believer and would expect me to cook food that has leavening in it. How should I handle this? Or how do I observe the Feast?

Again, thanks for all of your help.

Internet

Romanian Keeps the Sabbath

I live in Timisoara, Romania. I would like to know if there is any congregation of UCG in my area. A few months ago I started to keep the biblical Sabbath, and I would like to meet other people that keep the Sabbath too.

Romania

Bible Study Course Helping Three Generations

Please do renew my membership

to the *Bible Study Course*. This is very important because while I was still reading lesson 1, my husband picked it up and began reading it, and we would often discuss what we had read and look up the passages in the Bible.

What is even better, my grown daughter, who has not been to church in many years, picked it up and started asking questions too. Her 17-year-old son, who has been in a lot of trouble, having been expelled from school, etc, was with her. He just sat there at first with a bored impatience, but as we talked, he finally became interested and joined the discussion. I gave them my first lesson because my husband and I were finished with it—although there are times that I wish I still had it so that

I could refer back to things that were in it. However, it has gone to better use this way.

I have not quite finished lesson 2 because I look up all the readings as you suggested as well as other things that come up in our discussions. I think this lesson will have some very good explanations for things my grandson was asking as well.

Maryland

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.



Local Church Updates

Church Teen Excels in Track

Brandon Smith of the Birmingham, Alabama, congregation is making quite a name for himself and letting his light shine as well. This young man has become one of the best distance runners in the state, and yet he keeps the Sabbath. Most major high school track meets take place on Saturday.

Brandon, a graduating senior who turns 18 this month, attends a small Division 1A school in east Alabama. There are only 250 to 300 students in grades K through 12, and Brandon is the only runner on the school's track team. But being the lone runner racing against the big schools hasn't slowed him down.

He has won 10 state championships in the 1,600-meter (1-mile), 3,200-meter (2-mile) and 5,000-meter (3.1-mile) events. He holds the state 2-A mile record set as a sophomore. He was twice awarded the most valuable track and field athlete in Divisions 1-4A. In addition to being selected to the all-state track and field and cross-country teams for four years, Brandon is currently ranked as the fourth best 2-miler in the state's history in all divisions and holds the fastest 2-mile time of the year set in Mobile in April. All of this and Brandon does not—will not—run on the Sabbath.

A number of college coaches were interested in Brandon until they learned how serious he was about not running on the Sabbath. Several coaches, meet directors and a lot of parents have expressed admiration for Brandon's stance, admitting the rarity of what he seems to be willing to give up for his religious convictions. Some of the coaches stated how much they respect him for his convictions, but that they had been forced to make certain compromises in the past with some of their convictions in order to participate in some of the college programs.

Four universities seemed ready to confer scholarship offers to Brandon. All withdrew consideration after being told about the Sabbath issue except one, Mississippi State University. The coaches there were so impressed that they committed to doing whatever they had to do to work it out for Brandon.

He was Mississippi State's number one Alabama recruit. He was offered a track and field scholarship and an additional academic scholarship and accepted with the signing of a national letter of intent in April.

His college goals, in addition to an engineering degree, are to run a sub-4 minute mile by the end of his sophomore year. Long-term he wants to compete for a slot on the U.S. Olympic Marathon Team. A lot of the marathon qualifying races are held on Sunday.

His father, Robert Smith, says Brandon is very quiet about his beliefs. He said he has encouraged Brandon but allowed him to wrestle with the Sabbath issue on his own. A couple of years ago Brandon made the firm decision to put

God first in this. Brandon's example speaks volumes to others facing similar situations: fix a firm goal, train very hard,



Brandon Smith runs at Alabama Indoor State Championship (photo by Steve Bedsole, Maximum Sports.net)

place your beliefs above your other pursuits and let God work it out.

Bruce Gore

Dallas Introduces New Development Program

After services on April 5, 106 members of the Dallas congregation gathered to experience a brand-new program called the Christian Development Forum, with "Building Better Bridges: What It Takes to Be a Closer Spiritual Family" as the theme for the evening.

After a delicious barbecue dinner, Doug Horschak, the pastor of the Dallas and Sherman, Texas, congrega-



Kit Mohr presents the "Special Feature" during the first Christian Development Forum in Dallas April 5 (photos by Phil Dick)

tions, introduced attendees to some of the reasons why the new program was created. He pointed out that the principal motivator was to find a way to apply the principle of "equipping the saints" (Ephesians 4:12-13). He explained that the Christian Development Forum is an opportunity for the membership to discuss and present concepts and strategies that relate to various Christian-living topics with the idea of personal development, relevance and application in mind.

At the end of his introduction, Mr.

Horschak spent a little time looking at the different goals for the program, including the application of known adult-learning principles such as the need to invite participants to share their experiences and to create results.

For the balance of the meeting, host Eric Mohr introduced the various session leaders and encouraged attendees to see themselves more as figurative bridge engineers who continue to explore and apply various ways to connect more effectively with others in the congregation. Steve Andreas showed attendees a few of the ways in which to communicate more effectively with deaf members in his brief session, "Deaf in the Family."

In their respective sessions, "Milk and Meat" and "Taking It Home," discussion leaders Phil Sandilands and Al Garrett used small- and large-group discussions to encourage attendees to explore biblical principles and apply their experiences and suggestions. Speakers Brenda Szymkowiak and Joe Hansen shared their suggestions on how to build more effective bridges to other people in their speeches "Have Patience with Me" and "Fellowship: Noun or Verb?"

In the "Special Feature" session, Kit Mohr shared Hispanic cultural values such as *familismo* (the importance of family) and *respeto* (knowing one's place) to encourage Anglo brethren to connect more effectively to their Latino brothers and sisters.

After a request for attendees to volunteer for future meetings and to complete an evaluation form, Mr. Horschak concluded the evening by reminding the participants that they really should not put off until tomorrow the changes in fellowship behavior that need attention today.

Eric Mohr



served both water and encouragement to parched and weary walkers. Eddie Foster showed outstanding service by running at and after some marathon participants with water in hand. Robert Teitgen climbed up a water truck to help install a sign for the 5K turn-around point. Jane McConnaughey cleared our part of the course of used paper cups.

At first there were just a few walkers here and there, and we began to wonder how much of a service we were really

offering in our assigned area. Then we looked down the hill at the far end of the street and saw a huge mass of people, reminiscent of the Israelites leaving Egypt, coming towards us. We prepared quickly, filling table tops full of hundreds of cups of water. While a few of the volunteers were

nearly trampled by the throng, we managed to deliver the water to dehydrated walkers and runners.

A local radio DJ provided a constant variety of dance music, allowing us to creatively entertain and support the marathon walkers. It was wonderful to see the human spirit at work: tired walkers who slowly approached the water station along the course left with a smile on their faces and a dance in their steps. Some even took the two lines of cheering supporters bearing water as a dance line and joined in the fun with some lighthearted boogie. Our service to the walkers was immediately rewarded; the fruits of our efforts were obvious as walkers smiled and thanked us for the water and laughed at our antics.

A wonderful day was topped off with pizza and fellowship at Gary and Jane McConnaugheys' apartment.

Cindy Gore

Bismarck Holds Senior Appreciation Day

On Saturday, Jan. 11, the Bismarck, North Dakota, congregation honored its greatest asset—its senior members. The day of appreciation started with Sabbath services and a sermonette by a local deacon, Ralph Redline. He pointed out that the seniors of the Church are the greatest assets we possess and that we need to thank them for their perseverance, their joy, their prayers and their example. If we follow the example of the elderly in our local congregations, then we will remain faithful to God for the years to come.

To further show our appreciation, the congregation put together a dinner for the seniors. A large table was set in the middle of the dining hall. The lights

were dimmed, candles were lit and Rachel Luecke played soft piano music, all in order to set the scene for the seniors' entrance. Two by two the seniors came in either escorted by their mates or by young men in the congregation. Each couple was then seated and dinner was served.

First the teens went around with appetizers while the preteens served drinks and the younger children served dinner rolls. Each senior was presented with a



Senior members of the Bismarck, North Dakota, congregation at a special dinner and entertainment to honor them, prepared by the younger adults and youth. From left: Otto Lennick, Leven Reiger, Gladys Reiger, Hilda Spitzer, Barb Hoover, Burt Daly, Vern Hoover, Ruth Johnson, Opal Gardner, Lyla VanOrman, Forrest VanOrman (photo by Paul Luecke)

menu so that he or she could make selections from the following: turkey, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, cranberry relish, stuffing and gravy. After everyone had been served this sumptuous feast, there was, of course, dessert. For this special event a cake was ordered, adorned with festive blue and silver roses.

To top off the evening, the youth put together some entertainment. Every young person in the congregation contributed. Chad Johnson sang "Tonight's the Night" with his mother, Anna. Marie Freije played a piano solo and Britton Redline strummed a guitar solo. Chad, Wyatt, Cort and Travis Johnson along with their mother performed a skit named "Cinderella." Sara Luecke played a piano solo and Amber Schulz sang "Castle on a Cloud." Chad Johnson played a trumpet solo and Sara Freije played a clarinet solo. Brandon and Devin Schulz ran the sound system. This section of the evening was emceed by Ryan Luecke and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The success of the Senior Appreciation Day was so greatly enjoyed by the seniors that one remarked, "You should do this every week!" We will certainly continue to show our seniors how much we appreciate them.

Sara J. Freije

Tennessee Kids Make Cards for Shut-Ins

Y-MADE (Youths Making A Difference Everywhere) involves the youth (ages 3 to 12) of the Nashville and Murfreesboro, Tennessee, congregations in a card-making program every other Sabbath. Handmade cards are mailed to local shut-ins and sick or iso-

lated brethren from other areas when an address is available. Because Y-MADE only requires basic supplies and limited supervision, it is simple enough for every member to become involved. Members also get to know our youth better and that is building a bond between generations.

To start the program, we assembled a corkboard with pictures and names of our local shut-ins to allow everyone to become familiar with members who aren't seen regularly. A notebook is kept with prayer request names and a log is maintained and updated regularly. The log allows everyone to see the answer to prayers when there is a healing. And health updates are given at the sessions.

Prefolded card stock is kept on hand and passed out to each child, along with a weekly topic (such as snowflakes, music, flowers, birds, the Holy Days, etc.). Children can look ahead at topics and bring items they wish to add to their cards. The volunteer supervisor for the week is also free to bring items to enhance the subject. Mainly, though, we rely primarily on the children's artwork for each theme. Members are also encouraged to donate craft supplies they may have at home, such as trim, buttons or cloth.

Cards are constructed, messages added and then they are mailed out with sermon tapes to the local shut-ins.

The children love making the cards and feel a real sense of connection with the people they have heard and prayed about. This is a win/win program as our shut-ins receive cheerful cards twice a month and our children and adults are drawn together.

The program has had three successful months of operation. It is our wish that our treasured members who are unable to attend services with us will realize what an important part of God's Church they are, and that they are not forgotten. If you would like more information on how to start your own Y-MADE program, please feel free to contact Shari Fooshe at threemmmom@juno.com.

Shari Fooshe

Orlando Holds Second Winter Campout

Jan. 3 through 5 a hearty and intrepid group of 76 brethren braved "cold" tem-



Braden Veller demonstrates being a lively stone by using real rocks at Orlando Winter Campout Jan. 4

peratures (by Florida's standards) in the 30s at night and 60s during the day to enjoy God's creation and a diverse schedule of events that enabled maximum opportunities for fun and fellowship.

Organized by the Orlando congregation, brethren came from all over Central Florida to experience a "change of pace" and draw closer together in these difficult times at the Pine Lakes Retreat Campground. Family-oriented meals were served around a blazing campfire.

Sabbath gave us all a chance to reflect on what's really important. Services were conducted by Braden Veller, an elder from Tampa, on the importance of being a "lively" rock that God can work with to build His temple, the Church. His live action demonstration on how to and how not to shape rocks kept the young people glued to his presentation. The flying fragments and sparks added a nice touch and motivated everyone to keep at a safe distance.

Youth classes focused on appreciating God and His creation, while the adults played a Bible game to test their knowledge of Scripture. Everyone enjoyed a nippy hay ride and a rousing sing-along Saturday evening.

Family games on Sunday morning provided a hilarious opportunity to see the "real" competitive nature of the players while trying the egg toss, water balloon throw and a multitude of races. God blessed the weather as the days warmed up and allowed everyone to experience the out-of-doors, forgetting for the moment the cares of this world. A challenging game of Bible golf rounded out the day's events.

Everyone left exhausted but renewed in spirit and looking forward to the next adventure in camping.

Greg and Kathy Johnson

Potluck Honors Jack and Wilma Williams



Wilma and Jack Williams (photo by Deborah Hedges)

After Sabbath services on Jan. 25, before a special potluck meal, Fort Smith, Bentonville and Mena, Arkansas, pastor Roger West presented a crystal plaque to Jack and Wilma Williams in honor of their years of service in the ministry.

The Williams first attended the Feast of Tabernacles in Big Sandy, Texas, in

1955. From Muse, Oklahoma, Jack and Wilma and their four children moved to Oklahoma City, where Jack was ordained an elder in 1969. Then Jack and Wilma moved to central Oregon, where they served in the ministry 21 years. Jack worked in farming and was employed part-time by the Church.

Jack attended the Indianapolis meetings at the inception of UCG. In the summer of 1995 Jack and Wilma moved back to their farm near Muse, Oklahoma, where they raise cattle. The Williams attend the Mena, Arkansas, congregation.

Bob Hedge

Cincinnati Celebrates 40th Anniversary

The Cincinnati North and East congregations combined for services Feb. 22 at the home office to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Church of God



Above, some of those who attended the first service in Cincinnati in 1963; right, Ed Smith, Roy Holladay and Richard Pinelli cut the cake (photos by Janet Treadway)

in Cincinnati. The activities began with split sermons given by Ed Smith, a long-time elder who has served in the Cincinnati area for many years, and Roy Holladay, president of United Church of God.

Mr. Smith took the audience down memory lane, covering the past 40 years with a PowerPoint slide show presentation. Mr. Holladay's split sermon encouraged everyone to focus on the future of the Church and God's work.

After the sermons it was time to sit down and enjoy some great food and fellowship. The staff at the home office found out that the warehouse had one more function besides housing booklets, as it was set up for the potluck. The warehouse was filled with long rows of tables, which were covered with tablecloths and seated about 300 people. Although it was a tight fit, this did not stop the laughter, chatter and enjoyment of each other's company.

Mr. Holladay, Mr. Smith and Richard Pinelli, pastor of the Cincinnati East congregation, did the honors of cutting the cake.

After the potluck came a variety show put on by local members. There were a total of 19 performances, including comedy acts, instrumentals, solos, group acts and performances from the children. "Teddy Bear Play Time" per-

formed by youngsters, Alicia and Allison Riley, Josh and Samantha Cook and Briana Evans, warmed the audience's heart, as did the children's choir performance of "Snow Day."

The evening concluded with Ed Smith singing "Dear Heart" to his wife, Angie.

Janet Treadway

Noah's Ark/Early Man Seminar Presented in Spokane

The Spokane, Washington/Post Falls, Idaho, UCG congregation hosted the Noah's Ark/Early Man Seminar presented by Arnold Mendez Jan. 17 and 18, 2003. Mr. Mendez presented a teen Bible study on Jan. 17. The following day Mr. Mendez presented his information in a double-service format. Visitors included members from around the state of Washington and *Good News* subscribers in the area were also invited.

Mr. Mendez began the morning session by explaining that evolution is not a theory because a theory is based on fact. He defines the idea of evolution as a philosophy because a philosophy is based on man's ideas, but often without facts to support the ideas. Mr. Mendez explained that some of his information is speculative, but that he encourages people in the seminar to think about what is said.

The morning session addressed subjects such as Noah's Ark, the Flood, the ages of biblical patriarchs and the ages of people after the Flood, the presence of shells and sedimentary deposits on Mt. Everest and in the Rockies, the presence of man for about 6,000 years on earth and the prehistoric fossil record, the biblical reference to giants, the connection between Greek/Roman heroes and biblical people, and animals' nature (before and after the Flood). Afterward Mr. Mendez entertained questions.

A sumptuous potluck lunch was provided by members of the congregation. Then the afternoon session began with an opening prayer, announcements and special music by the choir which sang, "River in Judea" composed by Jack Feldman. The choir was directed by Karen Allwine.

The afternoon session included information on early man. Mr. Mendez presented evidence that evolutionists have manipulated data and fossils to fit their "philosophy." One example he cited was that scientists have changed the shape of fossil skulls to support their evolutionary ideas. He said evolution is not provable. The problem is not the fossils; it is the interpretation of ideas.

Before the morning session, during the lunch break and after the afternoon session, the attendees were able to view the many displays and models that Mr. Mendez brought with him.

The seminar was very well attended.

The information is vital to help our young people make intelligent decisions, so that they can clearly prove God and creation for themselves and be able to explain it to peers.

More information about Mr. Mendez's seminars is available on his Web site at www.ucglive.com/noah/.

Karen Allwine

Charleston Has Eighth Anniversary and First Baptism

In March 1995 a number of members in Charleston, West Virginia, and David



John Foster and Kevin Scarbrough

Mills, now a pastor in North Carolina, formed a congregation that later became part of the United Church of God. Eight years later, on March 15, 2003, the first baptism took place. John Foster, pastor of the Charleston, Roanoke and Princeton congregations, baptized Kevin Scarbrough.

John Foster

Newsstand Story: "Thrown Rolls" and GNs

Members in Missouri recently placed a *Good News* newsstand in Lambert's Cafe in Sikeston, Missouri. Lambert's has a large restaurant there and another one just north of Branson, Missouri. Their "claim to fame" is their hot rolls. If you want one, you hold up your hand and the waiter throws you a hot roll. They call themselves "the home of the thrown rolls."

These restaurants have become favorites for tour buses. In Sikeston, they're right off of Interstate 55 and attract the traffic traveling between Chicago, St. Louis, Memphis and New Orleans. This newsstand just opened, and we are currently distributing about 100 GNs each week. We are monitoring it to make sure the magazines aren't just being dumped, and it appears that they are being taken one at a time.

Since most of the customers at the restaurant are just traveling through, we will probably not generate many local subscriptions this way, but we're excited about the numbers. You would imagine that people on a tour bus might get on their bus and begin reading right away.

Dave and Becky Johnson

Cincinnati North Honors Oldest Member

March 17, 2003, marked a milestone for Mrs. Alva Patrick of Cincinnati, Ohio. Alva turned 80 on what is known around the world as "St. Patrick's Day." Of course, we do not celebrate St. Patrick's Day, but the Cincinnati North congregation could not miss the opportunity to honor our "Saint" Alva Patrick



Jim O'Brien, Cincinnati North pastor, congratulates Alva Patrick, who turned 80 on March 17, and her son Fred

with cake and punch after services. Jim O'Brien, pastor of the Cincinnati North congregation, also surprised Alva by personally delivering flowers to her home on her birthday.

Mrs. Patrick has spent half of her 80 years being faithful and dedicated to

God and the Church. She started attending Church in August of 1963 and still attends almost every Sabbath with her son Fred.

Mrs. Patrick has four children, Rufus, Don, Fred and Pat; nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Mrs. Patrick is a shining example to all of us in the Cincinnati North congregation of staying true to the faith and not giving up. So when March 17 comes, we think of our own Saint Patrick, who was born on that day, Alva Patrick.

Janet Treadway

Teen's Artwork of Heritage Featured on School Notecards

When art students at Oxford High School (Massachusetts) were given the challenge of producing artwork of their most memorable place, Randy McConnaughey, 15, thought of Heritage Reservation, Pennsylvania, a United Youth Camp site for the past seven years.

He submitted a full-color sketch of the dock on the lake at sunset. "This place reminds me of the great times that I had with all my friends from around the country," he wrote.

His artwork was among those selected to be printed as sets of notecards. The notecards are being sold by Oxford High School as a fundraiser to provide gradu-



Heritage Reservation, Pennsylvania: "This place reminds me of the great times that I had with all my friends from around the country" it says under Randy McConnaughey's artwork on notecards being sold as a fundraiser at his former school

ating seniors with a safe, fun, alcohol-free graduation party.

Randy currently attends Loveland High School (Ohio) while his parents, Gary and Jane McConnaughey, attend Ambassador Bible Center. Randy plans to attend college and "major in graphic and Web design."

ABC Enjoys a Super Bowl of Chili and Other Activities

It was a swashbuckling good time on Super Bowl Sunday Jan. 26 for ABC students, home office staff and families. Timbers were shivered by the cold temperatures of Ohio in January, but the chili

and fellowship inside the home office building made for warm, calm seas.

The evening "kicked off" at 5 p.m. with table games, sledding adventures and friendly speculation about the outcome of the big game. The evening blitzed forward with a chili potluck including a cake in the form of a football field. Spectators enjoyed watching the game in the ABC classroom, with Raiders fans on the right and Buccaneers on the left. They enjoyed friendly competition including banners, costumes, cheering and victory dances.

Casa Antions

The ABC students also enjoyed a festive night of Mexican food and conversation at "Casa Antions," as half of the class went to Gary and Barbara Antion's home March 15, and the other half visited March 23. "Wow! There was a lot of food," said Mark Holladay. "Everyone really appreciated all the work that the Antions put into this dinner to make the night very special."

An Evening at the Clubhouse

ABC students were treated to an

evening of fun and games on March 16 at the clubhouse at Ralph Levy's complex. The evening began with vigor as hungry students rushed to the line for Chinese food. The evening continued with an old Christian party favorite, Bible charades. The single most satisfying event of the evening was seeing Dr. Levy (upon being prompted several times) pantomime Jacob wrestling with God.

From ABCTimes (www.ucg.org/abc), contributors Michelle Zollner, Mark Holladay and Wil Young



Tania Marshall, a member in Calgary, Alberta, received her master's of science degree in November 2002. Her thesis was on "Trauma in Elite Athletes," and she interviewed several 2002 Winter Olympic athletes in preparing her thesis

You Can Write for *United News*—Here's How!

■ Here are the guidelines for writing for *United News*. We look forward to hearing from you!

United News is the official newspaper of the United Church of God, an International Association. Its purpose is to cover the news of United that members are concerned about in a concise, interesting, readable way and to provide inspirational/spiritual articles addressing timely issues of interest to members. *United News* is designed to encourage unity and brotherhood by informing members about the work we are all involved in and about our brothers and sisters around the world. It is also a tool for the spiritual development and equipping of the members for the work of service.

United News is sent to all English-speaking members around the world, as well as to others who request it, and portions are translated into other languages. It is published 10 times a year, generally on the first Monday of each month except April and October.

We have no staff of official paid writ-

ers, so we rely on the talents and efforts of ministers and members for articles. We appreciate your contributions! Writers can contribute in these areas:

"From the Word" Biblical Articles, Including "Treasure Digest"

Along with providing United members with news, *United News* is also available to provide spiritual food especially for members. We want to make sure we have articles about the festivals in season. As well, we are looking for other articles of doctrine, instruction and encouragement to strengthen the membership. This could include articles on the need for urgency, effective prayer, making time for meaningful meditation, reenergizing Bible study, dealing with a particular doctrine that some are being misled about, Christian living and a multitude of other possible topics. Please let us know any ideas you are planning to work on so we can avoid duplication of effort (mike_bennett@ucg.org).

Most articles should be between 800 and 1,800 words. Beyond that (beyond one newspaper page), readers tend to lose interest or put off reading the article

until later, if ever. Sidebars and graphic suggestions are welcome for the longer articles to help break up the text and grab readers' interest.

"Treasure Digest" mini-articles are generally 100 to 400 words and can include short items of biblical wisdom, humor or practical Christian living information.

We prefer to quote from the New King James Version when quoting scriptures. When you have a specific reason for quoting another translation, please note the translation. Please use the exact punctuation, capitalization and spelling in the version you are using.

When quoting outside sources, include the following information: author's name, complete title of the book, year of publication and page quoted. It would appear like this: (William Bennett, *The Book of Virtues*, 1993, p. 123). Please normally include this information in the article in parentheses, not in footnotes or endnotes or in a bibliography. Please double-check names and other references and include a photocopy of the source when possible.

"From the Word" and "Treasure Digest" articles are due three weeks before the publication date to allow time for the doctrinal review process.

News Articles, Including "News From Around the World" and "News at a Glance"

We want *United News* to be the mem-

bers' best source of comprehensive news about the work God is doing through United around the world. We encourage members to let us know about the latest news, even if they do not feel comfortable writing it up themselves. News articles should generally include the answer to the following questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?

Quotes from those involved in a project work better for a news article than editorial comments by the writer. In some cases it would be better for *United News* to quote you, rather than having you as the author. In other cases, such as reports on international trips, first-person articles are acceptable.

Please double-check names and references.

Most news and "News From Around the World" articles are from 200 to 800 words, with occasional 1,800-word (full-page) articles. "News at a Glance" articles are generally around 100 words or less.

News articles are generally due two weeks before the publication date, though we do our best to accommodate late-breaking news whenever possible. We appreciate a "heads up" about possible late-breaking items and the potential length so we can reserve space.

"Local Church Updates"

Many members are interested in what their brothers and sisters around the world are doing in their local congrega-

tions. Unique activities can give other congregations ideas as well. We would like to feature an interesting event from every congregation if possible.

If your congregation's news and events are never covered in *United News*, why not check with your pastor and send something in? We're looking for 100- to 300-word articles and photographs with captions. Include the author's and photographer's names and your phone number. Please double-check the spelling of names.

This section also features items about the special achievements of members and their children.

"Announcements"

Members are welcome to submit announcements of the births, engagements, weddings, significant anniversaries (25, 40, 50, 60, etc.) and obituaries in their families. Check the "Announcements" section for the standard style of these items. Most items are 50 to 100 words and should not exceed 250 words.

"Tribute" articles are obituaries for elders and elders' wives and are generally arranged by the regional pastor.

"Letters" and Suggestions

Reader comments and suggestions to improve *United News* are welcome. Please include your name and city and state (province), though names will not be printed. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. **UN**

How to Submit Material

If you would like to submit any of the above types of material, or if you have any suggestions, please contact *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027 or mike_bennett@ucg.org. Please include a self-addressed envelope if you would like photos returned.

Announcements

Births



Cameron Alexandra Clark

Born to Samantha (Karen Engelbart) and Brian Clark, their first child, a daughter, Cameron Alexandra Clark, on July 16, 2002, in Dallas, Texas. She weighed 9 pounds and was 21 3/4 inches long. The grandparents are Tina Engelbart and the late Ozzie Engelbart.

Tony and Kari Kardell of the Minneapolis, Minnesota, congregation are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, Joshua Anthony. Joshua was



Joshua Anthony Kardell

born Aug. 30, 2002, and weighed 8 pounds 12 ounces and was 21 3/4 inches long.

The proud grandparents are Vern and Anita Kardell of the Mankato, Minnesota, congregation and Tom and Ann Rademacher of Cologne, Minnesota.



Jonathan Peter Chick

Grant and Kim Chick of Durban, South Africa, are proud to announce the arrival of their third son Jonathan Peter on Nov. 6, 2002. He was born by C-section and weighed 4.05 kilograms (8.92 pounds). Brothers Lawrence and Graham are delighted with the new addition

as are grandparents Roy and Jean Demont of South Africa and Jan Chick of New Zealand.

Todd and Julie (Froedge) O'Brien are extremely excited to announce the birth



Madison Brooks O'Brien

of their first child, Madison Brooks O'Brien, on Feb. 22, 2003. She weighed a healthy 8 pounds 14 ounces and was 20 1/2 inches long.

Madison is the first grandchild for both Jim and Donna O'Brien of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Ron and Carol Froedge of Paducah, Kentucky. Everyone is ecstatic!

Cliff and Susan Demarest, along with big brothers Derek and David, are delighted to announce the birth of Kaley



Kaley Solenne Demarest

Solenne on Oct. 4, 2002. Kaley weighed 6 pounds 5 ounces and was 19 1/2 inches long. Proud grandparents are Don and Edwina Thomas of Mobile, Alabama, and Roy and Pauline Demarest of Boynton Beach, Florida.

Joe and Elisa (Quintanilla) Arner of Golden, Colorado, are thrilled to announce the birth of their second child,



Garrison Michael Arner

Garrison Michael. Garrison was born on Nov. 10, 2002, and weighed 7 pounds 6 ounces and was 19 1/2 inches long. Big brother Nicholas and grandparents Gerardo and Mercedes Quintanilla and Josephine and Radford Arner are pleased with the latest addition to the family.

Kevin and Andrea (Dame) Kapales of the Bentonville, Arkansas, congregation were blessed with healthy twins. Andrew Ryan and Aubrey Claire were born on July 10, 2002, at 36 weeks ges-



Drew and Aubrey Kapales with big sister Makenzie

tation. Drew weighed 5 pounds 13 ounces and was 18 1/4 inches. Aubrey weighed 5 pounds 2 ounces and was 18 inches. The happy big sister, Makenzie, age 4, had prayed for two babies and to her parents' surprise, her prayers were answered.

Grandparents are Buel and Peggy Dame, great-grandparents are Charles and Aleeta Dame and great-great-grandmother is Lela Miller, all of the Sedgwick, Arkansas, congregation. Grandparents Ervin and Joyce Kapales reside in Hoxie, Arkansas.

The family had asked for prayers when Andrea went into premature labor at 26 weeks and was placed on bedrest. They appreciate your prayers and the many cards they received.

Weddings

Mr. and Mrs. Randy Schreiber of Phoenix, Arizona, are happy to announce the marriage of their daughter



Ross and Brandy Klobuchar

ter Brandy Kay Schreiber to Ross Alan Klobuchar, son of Marlys Klobuchar of Hibbing, Minnesota. The wedding was performed Feb. 16, 2003, at Carefree Resort and Villas in Carefree, Arizona,

by Randy Schreiber, the bride's father. The new couple reside in Reno, Nevada.

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Petty of San Antonio, Texas, are very pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter, Kelley Richelle Petty, to Jason Andrew Mortier, son of Mr. and Mrs. Donn Mortier of Eldorado, Wisconsin.



Jason and Kelley Mortier

The ceremony was performed by the bride's father in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, on July 20, 2002. Following the wedding, the celebration continued with a dinner and dance reception.

The couple reside in Fond du Lac and attend the Oshkosh, Wisconsin, congregation.

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Earl Smith Jr. of Geneva, Alabama, are happy to announce the marriage of their daughter, Sarah Michelle Smith to Matthew Albert Picklesimer, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roger Picklesimer of Andalusia, Alabama. The wedding took place in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, on March 21, 2003, in a ceremony performed by Jerold Aust, a



Michelle and Matthew Picklesimer

UCG minister in Mobile, Alabama. April Smith was maid of honor and Caleb Picklesimer was best man. The bride is a student at Wallace Community College in Dothan, Alabama, and the groom is a general contractor. The new couple lives in Slocumb, Alabama. They attend the Geneva congregation.

Ben Mauldin III and Rebekah Shrode were married on March 15, 2003. The ceremony was performed in Dallas by the groom's father, Ben Mauldin II. Parents of the bride are Jim and Becky Shrode of Dallas, Texas. Parents of the groom are Ben and Linda Mauldin of Academy, Texas. The bride's attendants

were Rachel Shrode, Sandy Sarin, Shannon Sweat and Rachelle Alexander. Alexis Servidio was the flowergirl. The groom's attendants were Britt Mauldin, Brann Mauldin, Scott Pierce and Chad Alexander. Blake Shrode was the ring-



Rebekah and Ben Mauldin

bearer. The couple now live near Temple, Texas.

Bonnie Jones Duncan wishes to announce the marriage of her daughter, Margaret, to Darrell Howard.

Margaret and Darrell were married Dec. 29, 2002, at the UCG Houston North church hall. The ceremony was officiated by Jim Franks, pastor of UCG



Darrell and Margaret Howard

Houston North. Matron of honor was Kathy White. Bride's attendants were Gloria Vaughn, Sylvia Pike and Maurine Harrison. Best man was Anthony Duncan (son of the bride). Groom's attendants were Ronald Duncan, George Duncan and Brian White. Harold Trebig, longtime family friend, as the bride's escort, was honorary father of the bride. Mrs. Charles Simpson was honorary mother of the groom. Ring bearer was James Sappington and the flower girl was Erin Sappington.

The ceremony was followed by a reception and dance. During the ceremony songs were sung by Ron Duncan, George and Janet Duncan, Aaron Hubbell and Sylvia Pike. During the dance, songs were sung by George and Janet Duncan, Joyce Duncan, Ron Duncan, Sylvia Pike, Maxine Mitchell, Karen Collins and Karlyn Erickson.

A second reception was given on Sabbath, Jan. 4, 2003, by the Athens, Ohio, congregation.

Susan Blumel and Wilbur Berg are happy to announce their marriage. The wedding took place among family and friends near Salt Lake City, Utah, Jan. 11, 2003, with Larry Salyer officiating.

The bride was attended by Virginia Blumel-Wilson and the groom was attended by Ben Whitfield. Both the bride and groom are graduates of Ambassador College. The bride also earned a Ph.D. in family studies from Brigham Young University.



Wilbur and Susan Berg

Mr. and Mrs. Berg live in Dubois, Wyoming, where Mr. Berg serves as the pastor of the nearby Jackson, Wyoming, congregation.

Cathy Wellman and Abe Stores were married July 12, 2002, in Clackamas,



Cathy and Abe Stores

Oregon. The bride, a physical therapy manager at Adventist Health, is a graduate of Pacific University. She is the daughter of Kay C. Bristow of Milwaukie, Oregon, and William F. Wellman Jr. of Auburn, Washington. The bridegroom, a self-employed general contractor, is a graduate of Ambassador College. He is the son of Freda Swanson of Eugene, Oregon, and Augustus Stores of Oregon City, Oregon. The couple live in Portland, Oregon.

Montserrat Baez-Jimenez, daughter of Irene and Enrique Baez-Jimenez of Puebla, Mexico, and Alan J. Warrington,



Montserrat and Alan J. Warrington

son of Diane and Alan R. Warrington of West Chicago, Illinois, were married Aug. 31, 2002, in Puebla. The matron of honor was Rocio Baez-Debravo-Rossanz, sister of the bride. The bridesmaids were Amy Warrington-Vierra, Amber Warrington and Anna Warrington. The best men were Tony Dukes and Dave Herbig and the groomsmen were Jack Carney and Alfonso Baez-Jimenez. The groom has a bachelor's of business administration and the bride has a master's in engineering. They live in Huntington Beach, California.

Amy Warrington, daughter of Diane and Alan Warrington of West Chicago, Illinois, and Samuel Vierra, son of Ann



Samuel and Amy Vierra

and Herb Vierra of Monrovia, California, were married Sept. 9, 2001, in Orland Park, Illinois. The bride's attendants were Nicole Horyn, Amber Warrington, Anna Warrington, Laura Lesko, Linda Schneggenberger, Andrea Brock and Romi Carr. The groom's attendants were Jeff Tauer, Scott Delamater, David Vierra, Jason Vierra, Joseph Vierra and Alan Warrington. The soloist was Amber Warrington. The groom has a doctorate of music and the bride has a bachelor's of business administration. They live in Monrovia, California.

Anniversaries

Wayne and Gay Mullins of the Ashboro, North Carolina, congregation were surprised on Jan. 10, 2003, when a limousine pulled up at their home and they discovered that their children had



Wayne and Gay Mullins

arranged a special 50th anniversary dinner at a nice restaurant in town. They were also presented with a memory album of pictures, cards and memoirs.

On Jan. 18 the Ashboro congregation honored Wayne and Gay with an anniversary cake, a display of photos and a congratulatory banner hanging on the wall.

Wayne and Gay were married in Pound, Virginia. They have five children: Jeff Mullins, Patricia Ritchie, Andy Mullins, Chris Mullins and Jeni Powell. They also have six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Wayne and Gay met at a baptizing tour and were baptized in June 1963. They attended the Greensboro, North Carolina, congregation when it started in November 1963.

Obituaries

Leona Cain McClanahan, 98 years and 10 months, died Feb. 18, 2003. She lived in her own home until last year when, because of failing health, she moved to a nursing home in Many, Louisiana. Mrs. "Mac" was baptized at Passover in 1962 and was loyal throughout her life to God's Church and to her friends and family who deeply loved her.

Helen Poda, 83, died Nov. 2, 2002. She was baptized in January 1952 and was dedicated to God's truth to the end. Her home was near Jonesboro, Louisiana.

Carolyn A. Strickland, 57, of Ridge-way, Virginia, died unexpectedly from heart failure March 28, 2003. She was born in 1945 near Martinsville, Virginia. She and her husband, Melvin, who preceded her in death, were married for 37 years. They had three children, Gary, Mark and Sharon Strickland. They also had two grandchildren. She will be remembered as a very good wife to her husband and a very loving mother to her children.

She was a member of the Church of God for almost 30 years and was a member of the Greensboro, North Carolina, congregation. It was her faith and beliefs that shaped the lovely person that she was. She had a positive impact and influence on all who knew her. She was thoughtful, kind, humble and unpretentious. She was a good example to all who knew her as was evident by the very large turnout for her funeral. She will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

Elnora Collins, 69, a member of the Miami, Florida, congregation, died Feb. 8, 2003, of cardiovascular disease.

Mrs. Collins was born in Waynesboro, Georgia, and was married to Cornelious Collins for 51 years. Before retirement, she was employed at Krispy Kreme Doughnuts for 16 years. She was a devoted wife and mother who was always willing to help in the Church and community when she saw a need. She was a faithful, longtime member of



Elnora Collins

God's Church, having been baptized in 1982. Mrs. Collins will be sorely missed by her family, relatives and friends.

In addition to her husband, Mrs. Collins is survived by four sons, Mathis (Mary), Neal (Marcella), Sam (Barbara) and Bobby (Beverly); three brothers, Joe Lee, Nathan (Shirley) and Francis (Gladys) Lewis; one sister, Gussie Bradshaw (Ervin); 14 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; one goddaughter, Faye Mongbeh; and a host of nieces and nephews.

The funeral service was conducted by Roy Demarest, pastor of the Miami congregation.

Bernice Hoppe, 83, a faithful member of God's Church, died peacefully March 13, 2003, at her home in Sikeston, Missouri. She was born on Jan. 11, 1920, in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, and was baptized Sept. 9, 1991. She was known for her quiet, gentle demeanor, being positive and uncomplaining in the face of severe health trials.

She is survived by four sons: Richard



Bernice Hoppe

Hoppe of Indianapolis, Indiana; Donald Hoppe of Plainview, Texas; Dennis Hoppe of St. Louis, Missouri; and Robert Hoppe of Sikeston. She is also survived by seven grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and one step-great-grandchild.

She will be greatly missed by her family and God's Church. Funeral services were conducted by David Johnson.

Longtime Church of God member Hilbert Harvel Schubert died peacefully at home in his sleep Feb. 5, 2003. Hilbert was preceded in death by the love of his life, Ruthie, his wife of 39



Hilbert Harvel Schubert

years. In the years following Ruthie's death, Hilbert fought back depression by pouring himself into church service. He joined every committee available and even enthusiastically participated in the choir where his voice and beaming smile

were greatly appreciated. Hilbert was a great dancer; he and Ruthie had become legendary at South Texas dances. After Ruthie, Hilbert continued their tradition at church dances by energetically dancing with anyone who was willing. By night's end he usually had worn everyone out but continued to dance alone until the last note of the last song! We look forward to seeing Hilbert dance in the Kingdom.

Carrie Johnson, 93, passed away March 23, 2003, at her home. She was born June 13, 1909, in Onaka, South Dakota. She married Algot Johnson Oct. 31, 1930. They settled at Prosper, North Dakota, where they farmed and later



Carrie Johnson

moved to Fargo, North Dakota. In 1944 they moved to a farm west of Hawley where they raised their family. Her husband died in 1974 and she was called into God's Church in the spring of 1975. She was baptized in the fall of 1975 and has been a faithful member of the Church for 27 years.

She is survived by 12 children (seven daughters and five sons): Marie, Marjorie, Janet, Diane, Virginia, Francis, Katherine, Russell, Roger, Paul, Gary and Darrell. Gary and Darrell are members of UCG.

She was also blessed with 34 grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, 50 great-grandchildren and four step-great-grandchildren. She is also survived by three sisters, Mae Weaver, Inger Robertson and Elizabeth Marweg; two brothers, Floyd and Harry Hansen; and one sister-in-law, Aagot Hansen. She was preceded in death by her husband; infant son, William; her parents; and her brother, Charlie.

Carrie Johnson was a loving mother and hard worker. She always said, "once a job is begun, you never quit until it's done" and "hard work never hurt anybody." She loved to work with her hands and her heart, which she demonstrated by her many interests. She sewed clothes for her children, was a good cook and would bake 10 to 12 loaves of bread a week along with caramel rolls. She loved to garden, can tomatoes and pickles and make jellies.

She also enjoyed reading and had a strong interest in nutrition and good health. She loved to read poems and loved animals, especially her house cat and companion, Fluff. She loved ballroom dancing, which is how she met her husband, belonged to a square dance club and enjoyed traveling and visiting relatives. In 1992 she went through eight countries in Europe. Her children thank the Great Creator God for blessing them with such a wonderful mother.

News At a Glance

Continued from page 4

relationships are also in the works. These articles all take a Christian, biblically-oriented approach, of course, and mesh effectively with our other Christian-living publishing efforts.

In addition, reprints dealing with religious and doctrinal topics such as Bible translations, salvation, repentance, prayer, "sacred names," the rapture theory and God's calendar have been produced.

Though the above-mentioned black-and-white reprints are not as appealing to the eye as most of our booklets and brochures are designed to be, they have the advantage of being inexpensive to produce in small quantities.

Since these articles previously appeared in other publications, most members will already have them or can find the articles on the Web site. We do not stock large quantities, and so do not advertise them nor encourage members to request them.

A typical reader request might be a variant of the following: "I've tried everything I know to quit smoking. I know I should quit for myself and my loved ones, but I simply cannot; the pull is too strong. A friend told me you had printed material on how to stop. Please send me the information because I need all the help I can get."

Alec Surratt

Attendance and Offerings Increase

The preliminary reported figures for the U.S. offering and attendance for the First Day of Unleavened Bread showed attendance was up 3 percent over last year, and the offering was up 4.6 percent. Total U.S. attendance was 13,287, and the reported offering was \$685,628. Once all individually mailed offerings are processed, this figure may reach \$700,000.

For the Last Day of Unleavened Bread the reported attendance was



What's New on the Web?

On www.ucg.org

■ UCG Commentary on This Week's News Weekly commentaries by the United Church of God written on world news and trends, from a biblical perspective. Read these recent commentaries and more:

"SARS and Bible Prophecy"
"Not All Christians Observe Easter"
"Don't Fight for a Dying Regime."

www.ucg.org/commentary/

■ Current World News & Trends View up-to-date world news events happening around the world!

www.ucg.org/worldnews/

■ E-mail Updates Receive weekly E-mail updates of new

material added to the ucg.org site and updates relevant to UCG members. Visit the E-mail Update Web page to sign up!

www.ucg.org/contact/updates.htm

On vcmagazine.org

■ The May *Virtual Christian Magazine* includes "Reflections on Loneliness," "The Jealousy of Reuben," "Real Peace" and more.

vcmagazine.org

On youthmagazine.org

■ The April-June *Youth United* has articles on "Is Everything OK?," "Can You Pass the Marshmallow Test?," "Dirty Talk—Does God Care?," "My Name Is Gossip," "Virginity—Is It Worth It?," "Smart Youth Avoid Sex," careers, "News for Youth" and the ever popular Q&As.

youthmagazine.org

Other Helpful Links

■ Youth and young adults' Web site.
ucgyouth.org

■ Singles' Web site for singles in the Church.
www.ucgsingles.org

■ Good News Bible Reading Program.
www.ucg.org/brp

■ Good News Web site.
gnmagazine.org

■ UCG News pages with Council meeting reports, letters, Home Office Updates, etc.
www.ucg.org/about/council
www.ucg.org/about/homeoffice

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

12,181, a 1.7 percent increase over 2002; and the reported offering amount was \$673,108.03, a 2.9 percent increase over the reported amount for 2002.

"We are grateful for these increases and thank God first and foremost for providing this growth," wrote President Roy Holladay in the April 24 *Home Office Update*. "We also want to sincerely thank our brethren for their generosity in these offerings, especially considering the difficult economic times in which we live."

ed in the 1980s in its heyday. The reason for this change is that we have basically outgrown the Pontiac plant. The Glasgow plant is better suited to our longer print runs.

We have various other publications being printed or reprinted right now, including 30,000 copies of the *Making Life Work* booklet, 10,000 each of lessons 6, 7 and 8 of the *Bible Study Course* and 180,000 copies of *The Good News* special issue to send to new subscribers and as gift copies.

Scott Ashley

new people are now signing up each week!

In addition, 1,424 people are signed up to receive UCG member updates, which give our users updates of Church news and other important developments. Approximately 76 new people are signing up each week. To sign up for either service, simply go to our Web site at www.ucg.org or visit our updates page at www.ucg.org/contact/updates.htm.

Michelle de Campos

Also, the waterskiing that was planned for Camp Hye Sierra will not be held due to the lack of needed equipment and safe beachfront at the lake. In its place we are working to have horseback riding as an activity for all campers.

More information will be posted on the Camp Hye Sierra Web site as available, at www.cgca.net/HyeSierra.

James Capo

Publications Continue to Roll Off the Presses

The total print run for the May/June *Good News* was 458,774. With this issue we have switched to a different R.R. Donnelley printing plant. For the last few years we have printed at their plant in Pontiac, Illinois. This will be our first issue printed at Glasgow, Kentucky. If the name sounds familiar, that's where *The Plain Truth* was printed

E-mail Update Utilities Show Significant Growth

It is encouraging to see significant growth in new people signing up to receive our weekly UCG Web site updates and UCG member updates. We currently have 4,521 subscribers to our Web site updates, a 33 percent increase over the past six months. This service lets our users know about the latest new items on our site. Approximately 135

Camp Hye Sierra to Offer Overnight Hike, Horseback Riding

As a special challenge feature of the Hye Sierra summer camp, eligible older campers will be able to go on an overnight hike to the summit of 11,240-foot Alta Peak in the high Sierras. Campers aged 16 to 18 who want to participate in this hike will have an additional application to complete, and are encouraged to get their applications in as soon as possible.

April U.S. Statistics Announced

In April, 31,144 pieces of mail were received by the home office, bringing the total for the year to 132,527. This is a decline of 11 percent, mainly because fewer promotional cards were sent out at this point compared to last year. Total Internet responses were up 73 percent for April, and 33 percent for the year.

Through April, 134,461 pieces of literature have been mailed from the home office. There were 4,593 donors and 2,022 coworkers on file, and 61 U.S. baptisms were reported. There were 885 Personal Correspondence questions and 287 church location requests received.

"Web," continued from page 1

introductory text on our page, so it's easy to skim the stories to find ones you're most interested in.

Besides the articles you'll find up front, we've begun archiving links. Since we began posting them in late March, most of the material is still fresh and timely. There's a great deal to skim and read already. We encourage you to take a look.

One of the goals of our recent Web site upgrades is to make people want to bookmark our site as their Internet startup page. With the addition of the regular news feed, weekly commentaries on current events and links to lots of interesting reading that's hard to find anywhere else, we trust this will prove to be a valuable service for many members and other Web site visitors. **UN**



Lower right corner of the ucg.org home page and, above, the "Current World News & Trends" page, which is updated by Church staff members each weekday. This provides more depth than the automated "Current World Headlines" ticker



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