



News At a Glance

Bible Study Course Offer Sent to 126,000 Readers

A letter offering the *Bible Study Course* to 126,000 *Good News* subscribers was mailed in October. We try to send a letter every year offering the *Bible Study Course* to our subscribers to encourage them to learn more about the basic teachings and fundamental truths of the Bible. To hold down costs, we mailed the letter only to those who have been receiving the magazine for more than a year. We expect to get 15,000 to 20,000 requests for the *Bible Study Course* from this mailing.

This was the second of four subscriber development letters we have budgeted for this fiscal year. The first one was mailed in July and offered 200,000 of our readers the new booklet, *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*. As of the end of September we received a total of 31,700 requests for the booklet—one of our best responses to anything we've offered!

Scott Ashley and Peter Eddington

S. Africa Gets Mail

Upon arriving home from the Feast, the South African office staff found 71 faxes, 97 e-mails and 617 individual pieces of incoming mail. In the first week after insert cards went into *Your Family* magazine on Oct. 13, they received over 150 responses. For more on the work in South Africa, see page 4.

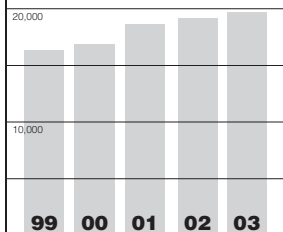
Six Elders Ordained on Trumpets

Jaime Guíñez Rojas was ordained

See "News at a Glance," page 2

United Statistics

Feast Attendance
Up 21 Percent in 5 Years



Camps Again Receive ACA Accreditation

by Matthew Fenchel

From Nov. 2 to 4, the United Youth Camps' (UYC) national team gathered at the home office for its fifth consecutive annual meetings. The discussions are an important part of reviewing the past camp season and planning for next year. Also during these meetings, UYC was presented with its second certification of accreditation from the American Camping Association (ACA).

Topics of discussion included a review of this past year's camps, financial reports and analysis, program inno-

ventions, approaches for Christian Living classes, staff manual, preteen camps, training materials, policy review, camp video, camp magazine and budget matters for next year. The camp team also met with President Roy Holladay and the operation managers.

Special guest at this year's meetings was Pat Hammond, national director of standards for the ACA. This year, four United Youth Camps received visits from the ACA in order to seek renewal of its three-year certification. Each of these four camps scored 100 percent on dozens of standards. Pat Hammond met

with the team on Nov. 3 and presented Mr. Holladay with the certificate. In her remarks she said, "It is a wonderful and difficult accomplishment for all four camps to have achieved a perfect score. You ought to be proud of what you have done and what you are doing."

Members of the national camp team are Larry Greider (overall coordinator), James Capo, Dave Dobson, Matthew Fenchel, Paul Luecke, Darris McNeely, Dave Myers, Steve Nutzman, Greg Sargent, Dave Treybig and Ken Treybig. Doug Horschak, chairman of the Youth Education Team, also attended. **UN**



Pat Hammond, national director of standards for the ACA, presents a certificate of accreditation Nov. 3 (photo by Peter Eddington)

Feast Celebrated in Over 50 Sites



Brethren in Bolivia celebrate during a talent evening in spite of the unrest in their country which prevented them from traveling to the planned Festival site; right, the children's choir sings in Regina, Saskatchewan

"God continues to provide His Church with growth and stability, and this was evident during these fall festivals," said Roy Holladay in his Oct. 31 "Letter from the President." Around the world, attendance figures plus the tapes sent to shut-ins totaled 19,761, about 2.5 percent higher than last year. Attendance in the United States and Canada was actually down about 1.5 percent, but there

were increases in some international transfer destinations, such as Italy (up 107 percent) and Jamaica (43 percent).

Attendance in Kenya also doubled, largely because of rapid growth—25 new members were baptized at the Feast! There were also 14 baptisms at the Feast in Argenti-

See "Feast," page 2

First Good Works Project Posted

The first Good Works project was posted to the Church's Web site just before the Feast. Titled "Special Needs for the Philippines," the project requests that congregations or groups raise up to \$3,000 to use as seed money to help unemployed or underemployed members help themselves.

"Employment opportunities are a major challenge for many of our brethren in the Philippines," wrote David Baker, senior pastor for the Philippines. "The current unemployment rate is 12.7 percent . . .

"There is tremendous competition in the job market and in some cases hundreds of applicants for each job posted. Since our members do not work on the Sabbath, they are often turned down for jobs. In one pastoral district of the Philippines . . . only 11 percent have jobs that provide a regular income.

"We would like to try to help some of our members start small businesses that would allow them to support themselves."

The Good Works Program was announced in the September/October issue, and more details can be found at www.ucg.org/goodworks/. Those interested in helping can discuss fund-raising efforts with their local pastor. Coordinator of the program is Tom Kirkpatrick. Additional projects will be posted as information becomes available. **UN**

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Inaugural Vertical Thought Magazine Printed

On Tuesday, Sept. 23, the inaugural issue of *Vertical Thought* rolled off the press at Hopkins Printing in Columbus, Ohio. The new magazine was mailed to UCG teens and young adults, ages 12 to 22, on Sept. 29. (Subscriptions to this age group will automatically continue until the reader reaches age 23.) Clay Thornton, video editor, traveled to Columbus to videotape the event.

The print run was 5,000 copies and the inaugural issue can be viewed on the Web at www.verticalthought.org. Hopkins Printing is owned by Jim Hopkins, an elder in the Columbus congregation. They have printed a number of UCG booklets over the years, and print the Spanish *Las Buenas Noticias*.

"We're very excited to see our

plans for a young adult/teen magazine finally come to fruition!" said Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services operation manager.

"Many thanks go to David Treybig, managing editor of *Vertical Thought*, and the many men, women and young people involved from start to finish in this project," said Mr. Eddington.

"Additionally, Jim O'Brien and the Cincinnati North and Lexington, Kentucky, congregations are contributing to the center eight pages of the magazine—a special section titled 'Inside Thought' that focuses more directly on what the young people in United are doing to walk closer with God in their daily lives. 'Inside Thought' replaces the publication *Us Teens*, previously produced by the Cincinnati North brethren." **UN**



The fall 2003 inaugural issue of *Vertical Thought* magazine was printed Sept. 23 at Hopkins Printing in Columbus, Ohio (photos by Clay Thornton)

News At a Glance

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an elder on the Feast of Trumpets, Sept. 27. Mr. Guíñez and his wife, Lilian, serve in the Santiago, Chile, congregation. They have two small children.

Other men ordained as elders on Trumpets include:

- Gregory Taylor Swartz, who, with his wife, Jan, serves the Columbia, Missouri, congregation.
- Brian Shaw, who, with his wife, ReNae Sue, serves the Chicago, Illinois, congregation.
- Tim Waddle, who, with his wife, Valerie, serves the Colorado Springs, Colorado, congregation.
- Jim Hudson, who, with his wife, Debbie, serves the Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, congregation.
- Jerald Kliewer, who, with his wife, Laura, also serves the Oklahoma City congregation.

PC Answers More Than 2,000 Questions So Far

As of the end of September, 1,197 Personal Correspondence letters had been received at the home office in 2003, with another 869 being answered through e-mail.

Following is Cecil Maranville's report on the questions received by surface mail. In September he answered a total of 90 letters.

We had six letters on various articles in the last *Good News*, most on the articles dealing with homosexuality. Several letters came in on various topics of prophecy, including the Beast, the Roman Catholic Church and the pope, the False Prophet and some questions about specific aspects of life in the Kingdom of God.

As we typically do, we had several questions about the United Church of God. They included requests for ministers to visit prisoners, the location of a local congregation, whether we address each other as "brother" and "sister," why we do not build church buildings and the differences between us and the SDAs. One young man asked if we are the same church that had the "YOU program" he participated in as a youth. And, a new subscriber in the Gambia cheerfully announced to us that he is in the process of beginning a "United Church of God congregation" there for us!

We received a number of racially related questions. A man of Indian extraction wanted to know if any Israelite tribe migrated to India and what is to become of any nations that aren't Israelite. Another criticized the *This Is the United Church of God* booklet for not featuring racial diversity in photographs of UCG camps. Another asked a series of questions on the doctrine of

Heifers, Better Health Improve Life for Brethren in Zambia

The following is a report from Kambani Banda, who was recently hired to serve as a full-time minister in Zambia. Mr. Banda has also been coordinating a humanitarian project with LifeNets to provide education and cattle to brethren who had lost their cattle to disease. On Dec. 3, 2001, 24 heifers and two bulls were delivered to two communities in the Mumbwa region of Zambia (as reported in the May 2002 United News.) This report was dated Sept. 14.

by Kambani Banda

I am glad to inform you that the heifers have dropped six calves but two were stillborn, leaving us with four, two males and two females. We project another six will be born before the end of the year. Already the families whose heifers calved are benefiting from the milk produced.

In the Feast budget we excluded the cost of milk, as the four heifers will provide enough milk throughout the Feast. As well as cutting the costs of keeping the Feast, the curds made from milk are a delicacy that are eaten with Nshima (made from corn and similar to, but thicker than, mashed potatoes).

I have never seen the members and their families as healthy as they are now. I attribute this positive development to a steady supply of antimalarials, antibiotics, dewormers, vitamins, mineral supplements and rehydration



Left: Apren Moomba, a member in Zambia, with calf; above: more of the herd, shown with the vehicle provided by LifeNets (photos by Kambani Banda)

fluids, along with the health education programs that go hand-in-hand with the supply of medicines.

The good health that the members enjoy means that they are able to work harder than in the past, and the good rains that God blessed us with resulted in a dramatic increase in productivity. Everyone has shelter and enough to eat, and tithes have increased to just over 100 percent above last year.

Our people are an example of the great strides that can be achieved if there is a little priming of the pump, education in godly values plus favorable weather. These are the same factors that will make the world tomorrow work.

By the way, during the Feast Mr.

[André] van Belkum will hand over the first pair of the next generation of heifers to Winter Chifwepa, a Church member. ["Passing on the Gift" is part of the heifer project designed to pass on the first calves to neighbors. Any further calves are kept by the owner of the original heifers.]

The procurement and supply of veterinary drugs is a component of the project that has made it so successful. A number of farmers have lost as much as 75 percent of their cattle due to various diseases. In comparison our mortality rate is still only the two reported earlier.

The cart that LifeNets funded was bought last year after the Feast and is located in Kasumpa. It is a big help in

hauling farm produce from the fields, drawing water and hauling firewood.

The van that LifeNets bought for us in December last year is running well and is a true partner in implementing and supervising LifeNets projects and an invaluable help in running the Church. The garage is now complete and therefore I do not have to walk 5 kilometers every day to the police station to pick up and park the van for security. The computer that broke down is now repaired and I am back on line.

I feel very honored to be associated with LifeNets and the Church of God. This program is a practical demonstration that God's way works and LifeNets is effectively pioneering this method of proclaiming the gospel. **UN**

"Feast," continued from page 1

na, nine in Mexico, eight in Davao City, Philippines, seven in Esquimal, Guatemala, and a number of others at other sites.

The Feast reports on pages 8 to 16 detail a number of fascinating stories, such as the two men from the Ivory Coast who after much struggle found the Feast in Togo. (See "Not Easy to Find the Feast!" on page 14.)

Another gripping story is how God

protected the brethren in Bolivia through the civil unrest that forced them to change their Feast site at the last minute (see page 9). Saúl Langarica, pastor based in Chile, provided this postscript:

"The unrest for Bolivia lasted up to the Last Great Day. On Sunday the 19th everything was calmed down and all of the brethren were able to travel back with no problems."

He also told of a family traveling from Bolivia to the Feast in Argentina. "Two times people threw dynamite

under their car, but every time they were protected by God . . . This family came to the Feast site very much encouraged and thankful for God's interventions all throughout their trip."

Feast Cybercasts

According to Dan Deininger, an elder who coordinates the Feast cybercasts, they went very well this year. We had five sites cybercasting: Bend, Oregon; Hagerstown, Maryland; Kelowna, British Columbia; Regina, Saskatch-

ewan; and Italy. We presently have two servers that can deliver a total of 120 connections. One connection can serve one person or a group of people.

The demand for connections on both Holy Days exceeded what we could supply. Plans are to increase the number of streams by the Feast in 2004.

"Many users expressed their heartfelt thanks and appreciation that the United Church of God offers this service for those who cannot attend for various reasons," said Mr. Deininger. **UN**

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News From **Around the World**

Work of the Church in East Africa "Booming"

If there was ever a time in East Africa when the fields were ripe for the harvest and the laborers were few, it is now. Eager minds are receiving God's truth at an amazing pace that is hard to keep up with.

At the beginning of 2003 the United Church of God had grown to 39 baptized members plus 190 attendees in five congregations and several Bible study groups across western Kenya and northern Tanzania. Subsequent pastoral tours during the Spring Festivals and again in August have witnessed a dramatic growth of interested people. As of July we had 17 groups meeting every Sabbath with 351 total attendees.

Visiting/Baptizing Tour

During the month of August John Elliott, senior pastor for East Africa, took a two-week visiting/baptizing tour, assisted by Monte Knudson of Phoenix, Arizona, who helped with the driving and preaching. During that trip 11 baptisms took place, with another 25 baptisms at the Feast and 16 more counseling for baptism. After giving split sermons and visiting with 15 congregations and Bible study groups, the men met several representatives of new "UCG congregations." New groups continually form through growing relationships with our members across the region. As God opens new eyes and hearts, there is an eagerness as they come in contact with the truth along with a desire to embrace and begin living God's true way of life.

Additionally, a new attendee from nearby Uganda is requesting that we begin working in his country. We hope that in time God will call more people in Uganda as He did previously in the Church's history.

Translations Into Kiswahili and Kisi

While some read and speak English as a third tongue, our English literature is not helpful to most people in the region. Consequently, we have begun translating the Church's core literature into Kiswahili. This language (often called Swahili in the West) is a common dialect spoken as a second language by many people who speak the different tribal languages of East Africa.

The laborious translation began early in the year and so far half of the *Fundamental Beliefs* booklet has been completed. The process begins in a remote Kenyan village near the Ugandan border where one of our young adults translates each booklet and *Bible Study Course* lesson into handwritten Kiswahili. His completed manuscripts are then sent to another young adult in Nairobi who transfers them into a computer document. These documents must wait until our only two ordained deacons, David Gichuru and Antonio Ndung'u, can take time from their work and other services to the Church to complete a word-by-word analysis and final

editing. At this pace translating and editing an entire booklet takes about a year.

Recently, the company that Mr. Ndung'u worked for closed its doors. Finding a similar job will be difficult as they are rare in the region. Only three members in East Africa are employed by commercial companies at this time. While looking for new work, Mr. Ndung'u has some additional time that he can devote to serving the Church. Mr. Elliott has asked him and John Owak, another principal assistant in western Kenya, to begin editing a new translated booklet apiece. The final products will then receive a final review by Mr. Gichuru before being forwarded to Mr. Elliott for printing.

We anticipate having three booklets ready for printing by April 2004, including *Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God, Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion and Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest*.

While this will then give us literature in English and Kiswahili, not everyone can understand those languages. Atten-



New hall under construction in Got Kachola, Kenya (photos by Monte Knudson)

dees from the Kisi tribe have requested that we translate literature into their local tongue. Otherwise they have only the Kisi Bibles the Church has provided them. Consideration for that request is being given as, thankfully, another principal assistant, Moses Nyaira, is a native Kisi.

Drought Relief

Urgent word reached Mr. Elliott in June that our members were facing starvation due to a second year of drought. The new seeds were not receiving rain and it looked as though there would be no harvest again this year in the *shambas* (gardens). (During their January trip to the region, David Baker and Mr. Elliott had seen decimated *shambas* resulting from last year's drought.) Prices for available maize (corn) meal soared out of reach for most people. Maize meal, or *ugali*, is a traditional belly filler in Africa when other foods are scarce. Having an ample supply of maize meal brings a family mental comfort during lean times.

A message from one group leader read, "The climatic situation in our home area is still unfavorable because soon

after the last freak rains and floods, a sudden and persistent drought ensued, ensuring total crop failure. Since most of us are peasant farmers, the situation is life-threatening since we do not expect any harvest until next year's season (if any). However we hope that our Lord will somehow sustain us and it is in this respect that we would request your continued prayers for our people to keep their faith in our Creator. 'Erokamano Ahinya' (Luo language for 'thank you very much.')

Members in Arizona, along with President Roy Holladay and Treasurer Tom Kirkpatrick, rallied with financial support to provide them with maize through the months of July and August. John Owak and others made strenuous trips to the remote congregations distributing the relief food.

Afterwards Richard Kibuye of the Nanjagi, Tanzania, congregation wrote Mr. Elliott, "We members of the United Church of God in Tanzania are very glad to write to you this message to . . . appreciate the donation which you have sent to us of relief grains. We received them. According to the circumstance we were starving because of the last year's drought and this year's flood. Our crops were affected and even we didn't hope to have something during harvest. But according to God's mercy, He opened the way to us. So all the Church members appreciate it and they are very thankful. May God bless you richly for that. We hope that we will grow spiritually and we are much thankful for home office for their effort of sending us booklets regularly."

During the August pastoral visit it was a blessing to see that ample rains had finally come to many northern areas where crops would be harvested by Feast time. Unfortunately, other areas received too much rain, washing away their crops, while others in southwest Kenya and northern Tanzania received none. Additional maize relief is being sent to some members in the region as we continue to monitor the situation.

Coheirs Together

Brethren in other countries sometimes hear of and learn from the circumstances and situations that their fellow brethren in Africa face. One example came from Ed Dowd in Phoenix, Arizona, who wrote to Mr. Elliott, "I'm always encouraged by the African brethren. I wonder sometimes if it is easier to have faith and trust in God when you don't have all the physical crutches that we have. Their life seems so uncomplicated. Ours are filled with computers, every mode of electronic communication (multiple phones, fax, e-mail, pager), automobiles and traffic, the 'wants of life,' money, greed, etc. These are things we fight with on a daily basis and try to suppress and keep in the proper priority in our life."

"It seems sometimes that the Africans' lives are so much more

focused than mine! The message you attached from Mr. Kibuye is filled with faith. In their life, they bless God for His servants providing corn meal. I know I don't thank and praise God at the same level for my food. I think there are many valuable things we can learn from our East African brethren. Thanks for always trying to include us through your correspondence with them—it's very encouraging!"

Dealing With Disease

Malaria, typhoid fever and measles are common diseases among members in Kenya's southwest region. Most of the anointing requests received are for malaria and typhoid fever, and some have both at the same time. The following message received in July from John Owak is typical of what many face there. "Mr. Daniel Ading from Got Kachola, Ms. Julita Atieno from Got Kachola and Mr. Joseph Maroko of Migori are suffering from typhoid and malaria. We have anointed them using the anointed cloths and we hope you will also keep them in prayer. All my family members are sick: my son, daughter and my wife. They are all affected by typhoid and malaria. But I hope God will intervene for their recovery as soon as possible. Please put them in your daily prayers." By the August pastoral visit to the region, most had recovered from that particular round of illnesses, but the young widow, Julita, had died one Sabbath day.

All told, a man, a woman and two children among our congregations have



John Elliott baptizes Lucy Kagera

died during the first half of this year from diseases. Mosquito-borne malaria typically recurs in each person several times a year. While usually curable if treated early, most lack the funds needed for medicine.

Additionally, typhoid fever is rampant near Lake Victoria where water supplies are tainted. Chlorine tablets are available for purchase, but not everyone who serves water-based foods and drinks uses them.

In response to the situation, we have begun seeking ways to reduce these afflictions among our members in two ways. First, we are in the second phase

of purchasing medicines through LifeNets that will be provided for our members in East Africa. Second, our members are helping us investigate the procedures for having water wells drilled near two of our largest congregations. It is our desire that both those in the congregations and those living



Utegi, Tanzania, congregation with donated eyeglasses

nearby have pure water to drink and cook with.

Physical Needs, Spiritual Needs

When interested people in Africa first approach the Church, it is often with hopes of receiving physical assistance. Protestant churches historically came to the area bringing religion, food, hospitals, schools and water treatment plants. Some come seeking such physical benefits from United. But as desirous as we are to want people's physical lives to be better, we do not have enough financial resources even to accomplish the work of preaching the gospel and preparing the resulting congregations.

The apostle Peter told an expectant beggar, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6) The United Church of God has precious little money it can distribute. However, it has something more precious than silver and gold, something that causes the spiritually lame to leap up and enter the spiritual temple of God. Those who seek the truth are finding it, embracing it and growing in the mind of Christ along with the rest of us. The true members are focused on living godly lives, not on their physical needs. The Church is receiving very few financial requests these days other than those common to members everywhere who face emergencies.

Unlike some Western cultures, Africans are interested, responsive and zealous when the gospel of Jesus Christ reaches them. So far, wherever daunting challenges have arisen before us, God has already prepared solutions that are revealed when we seek His will. The task is huge; too large for those of us involved at the present. Yet the joy of serving our wonderful new brethren is greater than the task. The spirit is very willing, but the bodies are weak and few in number. Please ask the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers. And to keep sending members, too!

John Elliott

South African Office Remains Very Busy

At the South African National Council meeting Aug. 31, Secretary/Treasurer Neil Becker gave the following report on the work of the South African office from June through August.

by Neil Becker

The period was a very busy one with responses coming in from an insert card placed in the June 2003 *Reader's Digest* as well as from a semiannual letter offering our booklet *What Is Your Destiny?* inserted into the July/August 2003 *Good News* magazine and mailed to subscribers on July 31. On that date 14,053 *GN* magazines were mailed to subscribers and another 3,847 were mailed to selected post offices around the country for insertion into boxes in post office buildings. These and other developments are described in more detail below.

Insert Card in Reader's Digest

An insert card with a tear-off "postage paid" section offering a free subscription to *The Good News* magazine was placed in *Reader's Digest's* entire South African print run of 85,000 copies. Through the end of August 2,300 responses (3 percent) had been received, which is below what we had hoped for, but better than the industry-accepted level of 2 percent. We are still receiving responses.

The print cost of each card was 14.7 cents and the insert cost was 18 cents. The post office charges R1.80 to handle each incoming reply-paid card. Therefore the total cost through the end of August of the 2,300 responses is R31,935 for a cost per response of R13.88. [All monetary amounts are in South African rand, which was worth about 13½ U.S. cents, or put the other way, \$1 equalled R7.33.]

To complete the picture, it costs about R13 to mail six copies a year of the *GN* to a subscriber. The initial response cost of R13.88 plus this mailing cost of R13 is a total of R26.88. If each subscriber also requests three booklets during the year, it would add approximately another R12 to the cost, for a grand total cost per subscriber of about R40.

Welcoming New Subscribers

In the past we welcomed each new subscriber to *The Good News* magazine by mailing them a copy of the special edition of the magazine, which contains

a special welcoming letter on the inside front cover of the magazine. We have since reproduced the welcoming letter in stand-alone form and we mail it out to first-time subscribers with a copy of the latest issue of the *GN*. This ensures that Web site, e-mail and mailing addresses contained on the inside front cover of the *GN* are up-to-date from the first issue the subscriber receives.

Semiannual Letter

South Africa follows the U.S. example of sending out a special letter twice a year to all our *GN* subscribers offering one of our existing stock of 30 booklet titles and the *Bible Study Course*. This had become a very costly exercise due to the way we felt we needed to do it. We used to mail the semiannual letter to each subscriber with specially printed cards on which the subscriber could mark which booklet he wanted. He then put the card into an enclosed return-addressed envelope and mailed it to us. The cost to do that today with 12,000 subscribers would be around R30,000.

For the first time with the July/August *GN* magazine we inserted just the one-page semiannual letter with each *GN* and offered the booklet *What Is Your Destiny?* The cost was R4,090, a savings of about R26,000.

Through the end of August there were nearly 900 responses from 11,859 letters mailed, a response rate of 7.6 percent with responses still coming in. We did not send the semiannual letter to the 2,194 readers who responded via *Reader's Digest* and who were only just receiving their first *GN*.

Also, 2,200 requests for the *Bible Study Course* were received in response to a recent semiannual letter.

Mail Drop of Good News Magazines

When ordering the required number of *GN* magazines bimonthly from the home office, we ask for a few thousand more than we have subscribers. We then select post offices at random around the country, but especially in the areas where we have congregations. We send this list of post offices to our mailing house (Lithotech-Africmail) in Cape Town that bulk mails our *GN* to subscribers with the request that they send the extra *GN*s to the post offices with instructions to place a set number of magazines in their post boxes located in the post office buildings.

Lithotech-Africmail folds each magazine and plastic-wraps them lengthwise

after first inserting a non-addressed label we have designed that offers a free subscription to the *GN* to the post box holder. We are getting a steady flow of responses using this method, which only costs us 22 cents per magazine.

We can only count responses from those who fax or mail the filled-in labels or advise us via e-mail where they saw the *GN*. If a person tears out a *GN* card and sends that in instead, we have no way of knowing how the response originated.

GN to a Friend

We are experimenting with reaching the friends of existing *GN* subscribers by using every opportunity to invite subscribers to give us the names of friends who they think might enjoy the *GN* as much as they do. In the past, when a subscriber gave us the name of a friend, we would send only one gift copy with an appropriately-worded insert letter explaining how we came to send it to them. But we are now experimenting with a more direct approach by automatically placing them on the list of subscribers for one year (six copies). We explain the situation with an appropriate insert letter that has a tear-off section, which they can use to inform us if they do not wish to continue the subscription.

So far we have only had four people return the tear-off section saying that they do not want the magazine, compared to many who have expressed delight in receiving it. One person described it as "stunning!"

Saving Money on Mailing: PAMMS Certificate

All organizations with mailing lists over 9,000 that wish to receive a post office rebate on mail tariffs have to submit their mailing lists twice a year to a firm called Intimatedata in Cape Town. It runs the list through its computer program and rates the accuracy of the postal addresses. We have to have at least 97 percent of our addresses of *GN* subscribers correct in order to receive a PAMMS certificate and a postal rebate. (PAMMS stands for Postal Addressed Mail Management System.)

The rebate is essential. For example, without the PAMMS certificate our bimonthly mailing of the *GN* would cost about R57,000. With the PAMMS certificate and rebate it is considerably reduced to about R29,000.

We have had to grapple with the job of correcting about 956 addresses (sometimes just a numeral or two of a

postcode or a missing hyphen) to attain a grading of better than 97 percent. Many people seem to have no clue as to what their postal code is, or what suburb they live in of the bigger cities. So each incoming request for the *GN* has to be painstakingly checked against three different postal code lists that we have from various sources, and which themselves have to be updated every month. It's a very time-consuming job. We have finally reached a figure of 99.32 percent correct and a Post Office "A" grade, which means we receive the very top rebate.

To save time in the future, we now enter all incoming *GN* requests into a temporary database. After we have entered about 100 to 200 names, we run the temporary database through a computer program we have obtained which tells us about any problem addresses we need to amend. We only transfer the new addresses to the main database after such amendments, and when the program tells us we have attained 100 percent accuracy. It is much easier to check through 100 addresses at a time than 14,000!

Media Efforts

We printed 200,000 insert cards at the time we advertised in *Reader's Digest* in June 2003. We still had 115,000 cards on hand, and the South African National Council resolved to insert the cards in

Your Family magazine, which coincidentally has a print run of 115,000. A 3 percent response would hopefully add another 3,450 subscribers to our existing list of 14,053.

In November 2002 when the current financial year (March 1, 2003, to Feb. 28, 2004) was being considered, the South African National Council set a goal of reaching a distribution figure of 17,000 for the *GN* by Feb. 28, 2004. The distribution figure for the July/August 2003 *GN* for South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana was 19,300, with 14,053 of that figure being regular subscribers.

Budget Report

Both income and expenditure figures (for South Africa only) for the period March 1 to July 31 are very encouraging.

Expenditures were almost spot-on at 0.2 percent underspent, while indigenous income (without the home office subsidy) was 24 percent above budget. Due to the stronger South African rand against the U.S. dollar, the amount of subsidy we have received for the period was 22 percent below the budgeted figure. Overall (for South Africa only) for this period we budgeted for a deficit of R64,207 but find ourselves in the happy position of showing a deficit of only R2,609. UN

Canada Places Two Ads in Alive; Tests Direct Mail

The United Church of God in Canada has placed two ads for *The Good News* magazine in *Alive* magazine this year.

The first ad in *Alive* yielded some very interesting and instructive results. In total, 518 responses were received: 468 by mail, 45 by telephone and 5 by e-mail. This represents a response rate of one quarter of 1 percent, which is considered a reasonably good return in Canada.

Of this number several have asked for additional literature, including the *Bible Study Course*. It will interest you to know that a few of these subscribers have decided to send in a financial contribution. One or two are now regular donors. Furthermore, in August pastor David Palmer reported that a brand-new couple attended the UCG congregation in Vancouver, British Columbia. Their first contact with the Church was the ad they saw in *Alive* magazine.

The second advertisement was in full circulation (200,000 copies) of *Alive* magazine in September. The Church's ad appeared on page 56. It just so happens that on this same page, *Alive* has an article promoting healthy snacks for children. Since the main theme of the September issue is children's health, the Church's ad picturing a family with young children seems rather fitting.

As of Oct. 22, 314 responses had been received to the latest ad. Here is a province-by-province breakdown of that number:

Alberta	.....51
British Columbia	.....63
Manitoba	.....14
New Brunswick	.....5
Newfoundland	.....0
Nova Scotia	.....7
Northwest Territories	.....0
Nunavut	.....0
Ontario	.....142
Prince Edward Island	.....1
Quebec	.....10
Saskatchewan	.....16
Yukon	.....1
Other	.....4

One of the requests in the "other" category was made by a person from the state of Texas!

Because it appears that *Alive* magazine is not distributed in Newfoundland, the Canadian office (with the involvement of the Media Team) is in the process of testing a direct mail campaign in the city of St. John's, Newfoundland.

Two batches of 100 letters each will be mailed to select households offering them a gift subscription to *The Good News*. One batch will be addressed simply to the householder or occupant. The other batch will be addressed to the individual(s) who are listed as living at the residences we have been given. It will be very interesting to see what results we will receive. Of course, as always, prayer and God's resultant blessing is the determining factor.

Anthony Wasilkoff

South African Statistics

Year	Good News Distribution Per Issue	Booklets Mailed Per Month (Average)	Mail Received Per Month (Average)	Mail Sent Out Per Month (Average)
2000	5,550	471		
2001	6,500	948	918	581
2002	15,000	1,801	1,595	1,178
2003*	19,300	1,548	1,604	1,674

*Through August.

International At a Glance

Nine New People Attend Isle of Man Bible Study

A Bible study for *Good News* readers on the Isle of Man Sept. 28 was attended by 20 people, nine of whom had never attended a United Church of God meeting before.

The topic, "An Invitation to a Royal Wedding," was presented by Peter Hawkins. After the 45-minute study, there was a further hour or more of questions and answers, followed by fellowship over tea and coffee.

The Isle of Man brethren present for the study welcomed the visitors and chatted with them afterwards. A number of *Good News* readers asked for details of the congregation's regular Sabbath service. A follow-up meeting is planned for early November.

Members Mail GNs in Zimbabwe

At the Feast in 1999 André van Belkum asked Mike and Primrose Mukarati if they would be willing to assist with the mailing of *The Good News* and other Church literature for Zimbabwean readers.

Before then the mailing was being done from South Africa. They gladly agreed, starting in March 2000 by mailing 40 GNs. Everything was manual—putting the magazines into envelopes, addressing and sticking stamps onto the envelopes. In October 2000, a congregation in America donated a computer that has since made the work much easier.

The Mukaratis now send out 1,400 GNs. Each year just over 400 subscribers fail to renew their subscriptions and are replaced with new ones. Postage currently stands at Z\$600 per magazine plus Z\$40 for the plastic wrapping. This brings the total cost to send out 1,400 GNs to Z\$896,000 [more than US\$1,000]. This is far beyond the means of the Church in Zimbabwe, so the Church in South Africa graciously helps.

To get more mileage from the funds, the Mukaratis will now be mailing out two issues of the GN at a time, that is, three instead of six times a year. Booklets will be sent out more regularly.

Mike Mukarati

Canadian Council Meets by Phone

On the evening of Sept. 16, the Canadian National Council met by teleconference for two hours for its regularly scheduled September meeting.

The operations manager, Anthony Wasilkoff, let the council know that donation income continues to be strong. However, Festival assistance requests are double from last year. Mail received in

the Canadian office for the first eight and a half months of the calendar year is almost as much as received in the entire 2002 year.

The Media Team is chaired by David Palmer, who updated the council on what is being done. This year the Church in Canada has placed two separate ads in the *Alive* magazine. A small trial direct mail campaign was also being prepared for St. John's, Newfoundland. In November the team will meet with Peter Eddington to make plans for the coming year.

Robert Berendt gave a report from the Ministerial Services Team. The team is considering producing a monthly newsletter for elders. They will be meeting shortly after the Feast to plan for next year. There was discussion regarding the manner for appointing the coordinator for the team. The Governance Committee was assigned the task of coming up with a solution to this.

The council then reviewed two proposed amendments and approved sending them to the Amendment Committee for processing.

The next Canadian National Council meeting was confirmed for Dec. 10 to 14 in Regina, Saskatchewan. The March council meeting and annual conference meeting will take place in Victoria, British Columbia.

Each committee chairman was asked to give a short update on the projects being worked on. The Pastoral and Ethics committees are working on policies. The Strategic Planning Committee is working on the Strategic Plan while the Governance Committee has been working on proposed amendments to the Bylaws.

Ramier Salomaa and Linda Wasilkoff

Canadians Comment

Interesting letters and phone calls come into the Canadian office on a regular basis. Here are a few:

One individual from the West Coast was so taken by the high moral content of *The Good News* magazine that he wanted a copy sent to each of the tenants in the apartment complex he owns. Apparently some of the occupants are living common law and so the landlord was confident our publication would help them to mend their ways!

A lady from the Toronto area phoned after she saw the GN in a doctor's office and was "thrilled with it." She especially appreciated the article on same-sex marriages. She requested a subscription for herself and also one for a relative who happens to be the mayor of a nearby city.

The following letter came from Watson Lake, Yukon: "Thank you in advance, and please keep *The Good News* magazine coming. I have some differences with some of your doctrines, but you teach the basic message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, so I am open to learning more."

A GN subscription card from the July 1997 issue of *Reader's Digest* arrived in September 2003. There was no postmark on the card so it's hard to tell when it was mailed. There was a 38-cent stamp on the card though, and that was several postage rate increases ago.

Anthony Wasilkoff and Edwin van Pelt

UCG-Germany Hosts the Holladays

On Sept. 3, 2003, Roy and Norma Holladay arrived in Germany for the first visit ever by a president of the United Church of God, an International Association, to the German-language region. Ignoring the effects of jet lag, the Holladays launched a busy schedule of visiting local brethren on the day after their arrival by traveling to Utrecht in the Netherlands to have dinner with the Dutch brethren of UCG-Holland. Prior to their afternoon trip to Utrecht the Holladays visited UCG-Germany's renovated office.

The morning after their evening meal with Dutch brethren, the Holladays did not want to miss the opportunity to join Alfred Nachtsheim, the 83-year-old former treasurer of UCG-Germany, and a few other brethren for a trip along the Rhine and Mosel rivers to see some beautiful scenery and visit the Eltz castle. The day's journey ended with a dinner with eight brethren, including two who had driven all the way from Munich (a five-hour drive).

Prior to Sabbath services the next day, brethren had the chance to ask Mr. Holladay questions during a one-hour session. Questions ranged from curiosity regarding the impact of 9/11 and the recent Iraq war on interest in the Church's publications, to a request for an update on the possibility for closer cooperation between UCG and other Church of God organizations.

For Sabbath services, 75 brethren from the German-language region and the Netherlands were in attendance. Mr. Holladay encouraged the brethren, who in most cases live far apart, by describing the seemingly slow progress during the early years of Mr. Armstrong's ministry, followed by explosive growth. He emphasized the ongoing need to be focused on God's international work and to continue preaching the gospel until the end of the age.

A potluck meal after services gave brethren a chance to fellowship personally with the Holladays. Members were encouraged by Mr. Holladay's positive

sermon and the personable example he and his wife set. The Holladays' many years of pastoral experience were quite evident in their contact with the brethren, causing some in attendance who have seen a number of organizational leaders visit the German-language region over the years to remark that Mr. Holladay is a "people's president."

On Sunday the Holladays attended the regularly scheduled National Council meeting of UCG-Germany. About a dozen Church members attended the meeting as guests. When the meeting was over, it was a sad time for many in bidding the Holladays farewell, since they had earned the respect of the brethren in a very short time.

On Monday and Tuesday the Holladays visited Germany's new capital city, Berlin. Paul Kieffer, chairman of UCG-Germany who at one time served as Berlin and East German pastor, accompanied them to Berlin and guided them through the unified city.

Jesminia Allaoua

UCG-British Isles Council Meets

The National Council of United Church of God-British Isles met Sept. 7, in London Colney, Hertfordshire.

Council members were presented with a statement of the Church's financial position from the treasurer, Brian Penheiro, and considered the outcome of an internal audit of the 2002/2003 financial year records. (The accounts were presented for external independent audit on Sept. 9.) The treasurer and the CEO, Peter Hawkins, reported that following discussion with the NatWest bank, several of the Church's bank accounts have been amalgamated, thus cutting out bank charges that were applicable to the smaller accounts.

David Fenney presented a report of the 2003 summer camp and the council considered options for next year.

Peter Hawkins updated members regarding planning for this year's Feast of Tabernacles in Grange-over-Sands. A draft of the speaking and activity schedule was also considered.

The secretary, Mark Webb, had pre-

viously indicated a desire to stand down from that position since his appointment earlier this year as a nonexecutive member of the Council. Brian Crook had volunteered to take the minutes on this occasion and had previously applied for the position of secretary. The council offered the position to Mr. Crook and on his acceptance formally appointed him as secretary.

The members also heard updates from the chairmen of the council's four subcommittees:

- Bryan Ellams summarized the work completed so far on reviewing the Constitution for possible submission to the balloting membership for amendment. One outcome may be a proposal to separate the present document into "Constitution" and "By-laws" documents.

- David Fenney presented a report of the work done to date for future Feast site selection. A potential site never used before by the Church has been identified for 2004; further work needs to be completed but plans were to make an

announcement around the time of this year's Feast.

- Peter Hawkins discussed several issues relating to media and highlighted recent advertising projects and the work that is progressing to revamp UCG-British Isles' Web sites now that the ucg.org.uk domain name is once again available to us.

- Mark Webb highlighted a number of issues being considered by the Strategic Planning and Finance committee. A review of Church operations and the use of existing and alternative office space are very high on the committee's list.

Other issues considered by the council included the need to establish an editorial team or review board in response to the Council of Elders' editorial resolution of Dec. 12, 2002.

The meeting concluded with approval of an invitation to the next meeting to Tom Kirkpatrick, UCGIA's treasurer, and Jim Franks, Council of Elders member, who will be passing through London on their way home from a trip to Africa. **UN**

Visitors From Council Speak in U.K.

In August, UCG-British Isles had the pleasure of two visiting members of the Council of Elders of United Church of God, an International Association.

Joel and Marjolaine Meeker and their daughters returned via England after visiting French-speaking members in Europe. On Aug. 2 Mr. Meeker spoke in Tonbridge where he gave a computer slide show of members in French-speaking Africa. Drawing on some of the difficulties faced by members in Africa, his sermon focused on being thankful for how God has blessed us in the Church of God in Western Europe. He urged members to keep in mind that physical things are not the most important.

The Meekers then joined the Tonbridge church for a picnic at Tonbridge Castle on the occasion of the 100th service of the Tonbridge congregation.

Aug. 23, Doug and Tanya Horschak, their daughter Becky, and friend Emily Quant visited London on their way home from the Ghana summer camp.

Mr. Horschak gave a computer slide show of members and congregations in Ghana to the Bricket Wood congregation. He detailed the background of contact with the Remnant Church of God, now part of United Church of God.

The sermon, on having vision through the perspective of the Kingdom, followed a sermonette by Diverson Chonde. "Divie" is a member from Malawi

who is pursuing a degree course here.

The ordination of John Ross Schroeder took place during the announcement time. (See *United News* September/October issue, page 5).

Half an hour after services Charles Akyigiyina and Abigail Twumasiwah Bofo exchanged wedding vows in the final ceremony of their marriage. Mr. Horschak knew Charles, who had helped at the summer camp in Ghana last year. A number of Abigail and Charles' family members also attended the service, some flying in from Ghana that morning.

The ceremony was conducted by Peter Hawkins, pastor of the Bricket Wood congregation. **UN**

Audited Financial Statements Reflect God's Blessings

by Tom Kirkpatrick

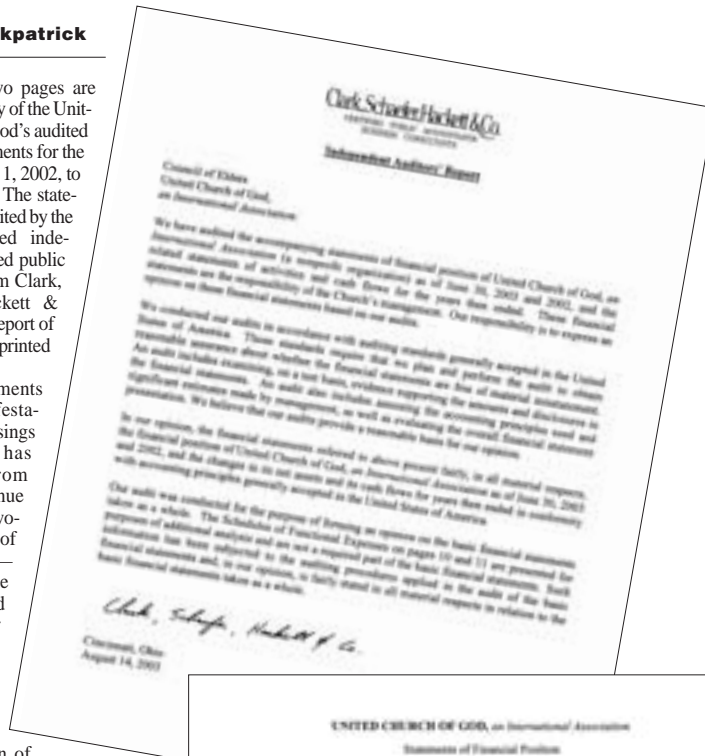
On these two pages are printed the body of the United Church of God's audited financial statements for the fiscal year July 1, 2002, to June 30, 2003. The statements were audited by the Cincinnati-based independent certified public accounting firm Clark, Schaefer, Hackett & Co. The audit report of the firm is also printed on these pages.

These statements are one manifestation of the blessings the Church has received from God. We continue to fulfill the two-fold mission of the Church—preaching the gospel and spiritually feeding those whom God calls. Growth is steady, and the financial position of the Church is stable. We continue to manage the financial resources God makes available to us in a conservative manner, based on our belief that this is the wisest course of action.

Of course, we must always trust God to provide the spiritual, physical and financial resources necessary to do His work, and the wisdom to use and manage those resources in a godly way. We will continue to do the work so long as God gives us the direction and where-withal to do so.

Thanks go to God, but also to the faithful members and others who contribute financially to support the work of the Church. Everyone's prayers for God's continuing direction and the where-withal to follow it are greatly needed and appreciated.

The accompanying box includes a few key summary figures from the accompanying statements. Note that the biggest reason for the increase in cash was the completion during the 2002-3 fiscal year of the financing of the home office building, which was self-financed during its construction phase.



	2003	2002
Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 4,945,132	2,914,251
Cash designated for retirement fund	777,186	507,281
Total cash and cash equivalents	5,722,318	3,421,532
Prepaid expenses	57,957	45,892
Property and equipment, net	3,864,072	2,560,707
Other assets	6,249	6,249
Total assets	9,750,552	7,034,356
Liabilities and net assets:		
Accounts payable	351,348	342,500
Accrued payroll and vacation pay	643,267	408,505
Payroll taxes withheld and accrued	31,083	19,911
Accrued matching third plan obligations	38,781	5,338
Accrued insurance obligations	135,798	136,281
Mortgage payable	1,838,819	-
Total liabilities	2,709,296	953,544
Unrestricted net assets:		
Unrestricted	6,304,386	3,273,551
Unrestricted - designated by Council of Elders	777,186	507,281
	6,081,312	6,080,812
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 9,750,552	7,034,356

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

	2003	2002
Revenues, gains and other support:		
Contributions - individuals	\$ 12,294,796	11,826,254
Contributions - local congregations	522,782	878,917
Worship offerings and festival fund contributions	5,187,463	5,888,896
Estate/personal property donations	262,864	137,349
Dividend and interest income	42,938	67,721
Other income	116,288	178,213
Total revenues, gains and other support	18,433,931	18,079,150
Expenses:		
Program services:		
Field Ministry / Local Congregations	\$ 8,298,047	\$ 8,409,736
Parsonage	911,134	872,930
International	1,480,977	1,212,643
Public Proclamation	1,838,246	2,268,111
Total program services	13,528,404	12,863,420
Management and general:		
Council of Elders / Home Office / Insurance & Benefits Plans	4,042,896	3,697,408
General Conference	89,589	64,809
Total management and general	4,132,485	3,762,217
Total expenses	17,660,889	16,625,637
Change in net assets	800,500	392,493
Unrestricted net assets, beginning of period	6,081,312	6,080,812
Unrestricted net assets, end of period	\$ 6,881,312	6,080,812

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

	2003	2002
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ 800,500	392,493
Adjustment to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities		
Depreciation	139,724	91,401
Effect of change in financing assets and liabilities:		
Payroll expenses	(12,067)	(7,427)
Accounts payable	(181,463)	280,280
Accrued payroll and vacation pay	31,562	16,328
Payroll taxes withheld and accrued	(8,248)	5,343
Accrued matching third plan obligations	31,587	(12,347)
Accrued insurance obligations	(463)	38,322
Net cash provided by operating activities	924,836	715,367
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchases of property and equipment	(63,089)	(2,182,343)
Net cash used by investing activities	(63,089)	(2,182,343)
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Proceeds from mortgage payable	1,838,819	-
Payments on mortgage payable	(63,089)	-
Net cash provided by financing activities	1,775,730	-
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	2,307,766	(1,466,946)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	3,421,532	4,888,478
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	\$ 5,722,318	3,421,532

Supplemental Cash Flow Disclosures

| Interest paid | \$ 89,781 | - |

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

Fiscal Year 2002-3 Fiscal Year 2001-2

Cash and cash equivalents	\$4,945,132	\$2,914,251
Total assets	9,250,552	7,034,356
Total liabilities	2,369,240	953,544
Unrestricted net assets	6,881,312	6,080,812
Total income	18,458,933	18,050,190
Change in net assets	800,500	392,493

Program Service	Management and General				
	Administrative Personnel/Staff	Member/Local Committee	Travel	Office Space (Office/Residence & Health Care)	General Conference
Salaries and related benefits	\$ 6,612,247	177,127	244,457	1,361,779	7,337,761
Contractual services and fees	2,762	—	60,839	194,499	6,960
Travel costs and advertising	—	—	201,007	—	201,007
Printing and shipping	33,817	13,496	607,400	33,833	4,470
Building and equipment maintenance	10,179	1,176	786,764	27,234	1,136
Telephone and utilities	171,269	—	60,840	276,799	249
Supplies	60,949	2,259	4,010	70,289	1,737
Travel, lodging, meals and lodging	76,949	—	30,747	66,841	1,739
Depreciation	847,971	37,037	7,176	144,761	43,363
Office and charitable support	—	—	—	—	176,734
International support	26,767	2,103	1,484,872	162,214	760
Research support	—	—	—	—	2,644,763
Insurance for the body	786,037	102,245	—	—	888,282
Allocations to local congregations	1,090,077	—	—	—	1,090,077
Research and health care	—	—	—	1,489,076	1,489,076
Other	15,010	33,239	47,459	155,373	3,099
Total expenses	\$ 9,209,297	313,124	1,689,271	2,129,292	1,043,492

Program Service	Management and General				
	Administrative Personnel/Staff	Member/Local Committee	Travel	Office Space (Office/Residence & Health Care)	General Conference
Salaries and related benefits	\$ 5,314,849	109,129	—	467,234	5,477,212
Contractual services and fees	4,294	2,000	—	16,434	107,244
Travel costs and advertising	—	—	—	201,003	—
Printing and shipping	17,049	18,949	—	1,940,212	19,364
Building and equipment maintenance	13,496	1,176	—	786,764	6,960
Telephone and utilities	171,269	—	—	60,840	276,799
Supplies	60,949	2,259	—	70,289	1,737
Travel, lodging, meals and lodging	76,949	—	—	30,747	66,841
Depreciation	847,971	37,037	—	144,761	43,363
Office and charitable support	—	—	—	—	176,734
International support	—	—	—	—	2,644,763
Research support	—	—	—	—	888,282
Insurance for the body	786,037	102,245	—	—	888,282
Allocations to local congregations	1,090,077	—	—	—	1,090,077
Research and health care	—	—	—	1,489,076	1,489,076
Other	15,010	33,239	—	155,373	3,099
Total expenses	\$ 8,479,719	252,651	—	2,349,112	1,043,492

Letters

Feast Fever!

Just wanted to let you all know about a serious condition I have. It is a condition that happens to me annually. It is not congenital (I got it about 17 years ago), but I have found it to be highly contagious. Since I associated with you folks, I figured you might be affected by the same condition.

It is called Feast of Tabernacles Fever!

It's a wonderful, highly exciting and invigorating condition I never seem to want to get over and that never ceases to amaze me with the intensity of its effects. It causes my blood to bubble (if that were possible), [and sets] my every cell tingling and responding to the synaptic messages sent by the billions of excited neurons in this fearfully and wonderfully made body of mine.

I am laughing like a basket case as I write this, for I am suffused with so much indescribable joy at the prospect and meaning of the Feast that I cannot help but write and express my profound appreciation for the blessing of knowing you all and for being partakers of the blessing of knowing the mind of God.

Nigeria

Address of Church?

We wanted the address of a church near us as we wanted to attend Saturday . . . Also, what is the dress code for the churches?

We have been Jehovah Witness studiers for 25 years. We never got baptized because we ask too many questions and the answers only lead to more questions. We left them and decided to go nondenominational. I've learned many things from them that I did not know before. Problem is that I don't agree with many of their teachings. I have received some of your literature and was surprised to find people that believe like I do. You also went back to the Bible and that I like. My husband is studying your literature and my son is even reading it. Next step is attending church.

Texas

"Opening a Whole New Area of Knowledge"

I want you to know how thrilled I am with the materials I have received from you on the subject of Bible prophecies: *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* and *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*. I also read *The Good News* magazine that contained additional material on the same subject.

My father, now deceased, was a Southern Baptist preacher, and my brother is also an ordained minister of the same denomination. I feel I have always been a true believer, having given my soul to Christ at the early age of 8. I have been a reader of the Bible, not as regularly as I should have at some stages of my life, but now that is a daily activity as well as reading the materials that I have received from you. I give you this background only for you to understand how thrilled and impressed I am with the material on prophecies you have so kindly sent to me. I don't know why, but we in the Southern Baptist church just evidently skipped over it. It astounded me to become aware of how very ignorant I was on this subject. I called my brother to see how he could explain it to me. His answer was that we, the Baptists, just sort of glossed over the subject of prophecies. To start studying this material is like opening a whole new area of knowledge for me.

Also, I want to tell you how very impressed I am with your Bible researchers; they back up every detail with the biblical reference. I have read along and said to myself, "Wow, is this really what the Bible says?" I read the stated reference and there it is word for word. And the level of their writing is also appreciated; it is like being back in a university class again! . . .

It is my intent to place your organization on my donor list. I will send a check by mail on a monthly basis. Thank you again for the teaching materials and for your outstanding work.

Internet

Switching to the Sabbath in Papua New Guinea

I am an analytical chemist by profession and am employed as a chemist with the Papua New Guinea University of Technology's Analytical Laboratory.

Since stumbling across one of your *Good News* magazines in May this year, I have requested and obtained several of your booklets for myself and my family and for other believers who have no access to e-mail and Internet services.

These messages in these booklets are eye-opening and thought-provoking for all of us who are starved of background and historical information required to fully understand the Bible. In fact, we have been blessed by the messages in these booklets.

I am a member of a local Pentecostal ministry called the Christ for the Nation Fellowship operating in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the city of Lae for the last 14 years. We have satellite churches operating in various parts of the country with a membership of over 1,000. Towards the end of last year (2002) members in the Lae church were prompted by the Holy Spirit to revisit the teachings on the Sabbath, God's biblical feasts and Israel in the Old Testament. After a weeklong conference on the Sabbath, feasts and nation of Israel in November 2002, the Christ for the Nation church in Lae was led by God's Spirit to abandon the Sunday worship and have gone into observing and worshipping on the Sabbath beginning Jan. 1, 2003. We are the first Sunday-worshipping ministry in PNG to make the switch to Sabbath.

Our ministry has now taken on God's calling to spread the message of the Sabbath, the feasts and Israel, firstly to our satellite churches around other parts of the country, secondly to others who would like to know, and thirdly to believers who worship on Sunday.

As a ministry being newly observing the Sabbath, we lack a lot of printed, audio and video materials on the Sabbath, biblical feasts, Ten Command-

ments, etc., to help strengthen members in our Lae church, members in our satellite churches and others that we are spreading God's Word to.

On behalf of my ministry I am inquiring and making a request to your church if possible, to provide us a bulk supply of the following booklets: *Sunset to Sunset*, *Holidays or Holy Days*, *The Ten Commandments*, *The Church Jesus Built*, *The Gospel of the Kingdom* and *God's Holy Day Plan*.

Papua New Guinea

User-Friendly Web Site

My wife and I started attending the congregation in Collinsville, Illinois, about six months ago.

We both use the Web site a lot. The content is obviously wonderful. In addition, the organization and functionality are very professional and make it easy for even the novice user to navigate through the information.

In one of my previous jobs I was responsible for our organization's Web site. I am not technically literate on how to make a Web site user-friendly, but I know what works and the UCGIA Web site is top-notch.

Just enough graphics to help direct the user's attention but not overwhelm the senses. No "bells/whistles" that just eat up bandwidth and make it difficult for users with lower transmission rates.

Please keep up the good work.

Illinois

"What Should I Do Now?"

I'm 17 years old and I get *The Good News* magazine. I have also read a bunch of the free booklets. Because of them I understand a lot more now.

But I'm confused about what to do next. I have never been baptized, and there is no Church of God near where I live. Most of my friends and family go to different churches that go to church on Sunday. What should I do now?

Internet (answered by the Youth Education Team)

"All the Sense in the World"

I have a burning desire to learn more about the festivals and the Sabbath. I have the book *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest*, but it has not answered all of my questions, only given me more.

How do I celebrate all the feast days, when are we too fast, what days, etc.? I want to learn all I can. I am going through the *Bible Study Course* and the biblical readings now and am fascinated with all God is revealing to me. (I used to read the Bible and it made no sense. Now I read it and it makes all the sense in the world.)

I want to check out a local church.

Arizona

Great to Hear

Thanks again for the magazines *Good News*, *World News and Prophecy* and the *United News*. It is great to hear that more people are requesting literature from or about the Church. The youth are blessed for having summer camp where they can learn more of God's way.

Manitoba

"Answers That I Have Spent a Lifetime Looking For"

I just want to say thank you. I found your Web site a short time ago and I ordered some of the booklets that you offer, and I am finally finding out all the answers that I have spent a lifetime looking for. You have made it possible to understand God's Holy Word and what God wants for us and from us.

I cannot express all that is in my heart, but just know that I am so thankful for your booklets and magazines.

Georgia

Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Comments and suggestions to improve *United News* are welcome. Please let us know if you would like your name printed. Mail to: *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, or E-mail mike_bennett@ucg.org.



The Feast of **Tabernacles**

Nearly 20,000 Celebrate the Feast With United

Feast 2003 Attendance Figures

Argentina	470
Australia	
Hobart, Tasmania	85
Merimbula, New South Wales	171
Noosa, Queensland	360
Bolivia	32
Brazil	65
British Isles	133
Cameroon	35
Canada	
Horseshoe Valley, Ontario	97
Kelowna, British Columbia	551
Mont-Sainte-Anne, Quebec	253
Regina, Saskatchewan	105
St. John's, Newfoundland	66
Chile	76
Colombia	111
Estonia	16
Fiji	6
France	67
Germany	190
Ghana	
Accra, Agona, Kumasi	750
Guatemala	
Antigua	483
Esquipulas	209
Italy	387
Jamaica	512
Kenya	163
Malawi	84
Mexico	348
New Zealand	95
Nigeria	120
Peru	185
Philippines	
Baguio City	147
Davao City	305
Iloilo City	103
Rwanda	n/a
St. Lucia	137
South Africa	315
Togo	32
Tonga	23
United States	
Bend-Redmond, Oregon	939
Branson, Missouri	1,368
Escondido, California	1,005
Hagerstown, Maryland	870
Jekyll Island, Georgia	1,196
Kerrville, Texas	1,056
Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii	706
Lexington, Kentucky	905
Panama City Beach, Florida	1,813
Steamboat Springs, Colorado	658
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin	1,183
Zambia	127
Zimbabwe	16
Shut-ins who received Feast tapes from the home office	632
TOTAL	19,761

Feast Cybercast (connections) ..120
 Note: Highest daily attendance figures. Actual registration at most sites was higher due to daily absenteeism. Cybercast listeners include some shut-ins counted above, so are not added into the total.

Argentina

Mendoza

Sunny, dry and ideal temperatures welcomed 470 brethren from Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico and the United States to Mendoza, Argentina. The vast majority of the brethren stayed at the Hotel Ejercito de los Andes where services, dining and most of the activities took place. The grounds provided ample room for relaxing, visiting, walking and playing. With nearly everyone in one location, it was like a mini world tomorrow. The whole hotel was occupied only by Church people, which made the Feast even more special.

Everyone was encouraged from the beginning of the Feast to know his or her priorities and to diligently work on them throughout the Feast and beyond. The priorities of God, family and physical activities (in that order) were emphasized and expounded on throughout the Feast. We were all encouraged to grow and strengthen ourselves in these areas.

Specific activities



The children's choir in Argentina; above, 14 baptisms took place during the Feast; right, part of the talent afternoon

were held for every age group. There was a children's party where every child received a gift, an evening of bowling for the 95 teens attending, a teen dance, a breakfast for the ladies, an afternoon of entertainment for the senior citizens and a Ladies' Night sponsored by the Spokesman's Club of Chile.

Other activities for everyone included the *Esquinazo*, a welcome party; a tour of the city of Mendoza, including a visit to a winery, an aviary and a chocolate factory; a talent afternoon, featuring dances from different countries; an evening of music provided by a Church youth band; a family dance; an Argentinean barbecue; and a sports day, with volleyball, relay races and soccer being some of the sports. All of the activities were attended by just about everyone.

The hotel employees and the Church men challenged each other to a match of soccer in the middle of the week. The Church team won this match. The hotel

employees wanted to redeem themselves and challenged them to another match. This match ended in a 3-3 tie. The hotel said the Church has to come back next year to find out who the real winner will be.

The owner of the hotel visited us the last day of the Feast, and he asked us how we were doing. We responded that every employee was doing his best to make our stay very comfortable. The meals were even better than last year—and we were paying \$8 per person per day including hotel, three meals and a coffee break! Well, the owner of the hotel told us that he and the manager were so pleased that they offered another 10 percent discount if we have our youth camp in their hotel in December! They also said we will have an excellent price if we come back for the Feast next year. So we decided to reserve the hotel for next year again.

The spiritual growth of the Church in

South America in the last year was made apparent when 14 baptisms took place during the Feast. There were also 17 children blessed on the Last Great Day.

After being together in one location for eight days, the brethren learned about God, learned to care for one another and learned to work together. Everyone was sad to leave the small, isolated world tomorrow, but promises were made to continue growing in and diligently seeking the goals set out for us during the Feast.

Gayle Hoefker

Australia

Hobart, Tasmania

What makes a great Feast? It begins with a decision—a choice to rejoice (Deuteronomy 16:14)! And all 85 people who attended the Feast at The Pines Resort in Hobart, Australia, came with a spirit that would contribute to a Feast filled with fellowship.

Add to that mix God's inspiration in many forward-looking and challenging messages, and the result is a sumptuous spiritual feast, validated by many positive responses by members.

Dennis Luker encouraged us to leave our anxieties at home, be positive and glorify God in our observance. He challenged us to be overcomers, sacrificing ourselves in servant leadership. We explored our dream of a better future.

We were challenged to become peacemakers in the Church, overcoming the pride that results in sowing discord, and asked, "Are we pushing God's grace when we travel 2 kilometers over on our sin-ometer?"

Activities like a mystery bus tour, a boat cruise, a family games and trivia night and numerous meals together, were all made the more enjoyable by everyone's willing spirit.

We included some unique Feast activities like a Women's Focus Afternoon, titled "Where Are You in the Zoo?", as well as a letterbox drop in the Hobart environs—the work goes on!

From the traditional cutting of the cake on the opening night to the special music following the last message on the Last Great Day, the Feast this year brought together all the right elements to make this one a truly memorable experience . . . if not the best Feast ever!

Stephen Clark

Merimbula, New South Wales

"It feels like Feast weather," is often the comment in the week or so before we head off to keep this great festival. In southeastern Australia, winter is grudgingly losing its grip and giving way to the gentler side of this teenager of seasons, spring—so different from what our brethren experience in the northern hemisphere.

After a "tearful" and petulant mood at the beginning, the days became clear and mild, the sun beaming down on 171 Feastgoers in the charming seaside village of Merimbula, on the southeastern coast of Australia.



Scenes from Merimbula

When the Feast opened, the stage area was framed with flowers. Beautiful music and an inspiring sermon encouraged us to celebrate life with our great God as Creator of all things.

On the evening after the first Holy Day, all families with children enjoyed an informal dinner together. At the same time, at another home by the water's edge, another dinner was underway for everybody else. This proved very successful in promoting

fellowshipping for the rest of the Feast.

In the days that followed, the inspiring messages we received encouraged us to eagerly anticipate and work with renewed vigor towards the Kingdom of God.

We welcomed the company of Dennis and LeeAnn Luker for the latter half of the Feast. They were returning to Australia in the year of their 40th anniversary, as did Bill and Carolyn Winner for their 40th last year.

Reflecting the Kingdom of God ahead, the tone of this Feast was one of harmony, cooperation and delight in the company of old and new friends.

Dawn Goodger

Noosa, Queensland

This tropical seaside resort town was the beautiful location for the Feast for the eighth consecutive year. Our attendance was a new record of 360 on the first Holy Day. Locals and overseas visitors alike enjoyed great holiday beachfront accommodations and gorgeous weather.

The harmony, peace and joy were the most memorable aspects of this Feast. Our meeting hall and other activities were buzzing with delightful fellowship. People just didn't want to leave the meeting facility. The atmosphere was just electric. Many of our visitors observing the Feast in nearby groups were warmly welcomed and continued to attend with us throughout the Feast.

The Feast video really captured this concept of warmth and love and put the icing on the cake for us. Dave Pennington, a deacon from Louisville, Kentucky, visiting with his family, expressed the feeling shared by the majority, that this was his best Feast ever.

Our seniors toured the Noosa Botanical Gardens where they were treated to a champagne lunch and entertaining recitations of Australian folk poetry by one of their own. Another senior, Ruth Cauley, accompanied the group on her piano accordion for a sing-along. An Australian family "bush" dance, later in the Feast, was a very enjoyable and active occasion for all ages.

Nature played a part in this year's Festival. The whales migrating south just offshore put on a display for viewers on the beach. Others fed the wild lorikeets and kookaburras from the balconies of their own accommodation. These were special millennial treats.

Our messages focused on our incredible calling and the responsibility that accompanies our calling—our responsibility to God, to our own brethren and to the world. We were encouraged by our speakers to keep the vision burning brightly and pass it on to our children. Many agreed that this Feast was a spiritual turning point for them.

Bill Bradford

Bolivia

La Paz

During the Feast this year in Bolivia, civil unrest culminated in the overthrow of the president and his flight from the country. The summary below describes the little oasis of peace and rejoicing that was the Feast in La Paz, even as chaos and confusion reigned outside in the capital city.

God powerfully protected the small flock of 32 people who met at the Feast of Tabernacles in La Paz, Bolivia, through the turmoil affecting our country.

Our original plans were to cel-



In spite of civil unrest in Bolivia that caused a change in the Feast site, the brethren were safe and able to participate in the planned activities

ebate in the tranquillity of Chulumani, but with the unrest, this was not possible.

Four ladies coming from Santa Cruz (Susana Fierro, Lupe Ortiz, Virginia de Antelo and Patricia Medina), arrived in La Paz with great difficulty because of fighting between the army and farmers. Although we maintained contact by means of cellular phone, they were exhausted and worried. The people and buses were even threatened by people who carried dynamite. After a night in quite uncomfortable conditions, they arrived at dawn. Of course we gave them a warm welcome.

Due to this lamentable situation, after the arrival of Fermín Naín and his wife, a second alternative was planned to move the Feast to the hotel where we had it last year. But God showed us once again that this would not be the solution, as more highways were blockaded.

The unrest began to paralyze the whole city. Then Mr. Naín decided that we would all have to remain together in the Church hall. So the members brought their things to the Machicaos' house.

The transportation system was completely paralyzed, gasoline was not available and businesses, hotels and even private residences were threatened, as a result of the chaos in the city.

At the beginning of the Feast, two members, Gerardo Mollo and Juan Condori, had to travel from their homes to the Feast site on foot, leaving several hours early to arrive on time for services. Later they were able to remain with the brethren at the site. During the Feast all the brethren demonstrated

responsibility, great harmony, service and aid to the others and especially to the ladies who were visiting us from the city of Santa Cruz.

In spite of the physical limitations, and in the middle of food shortages in the city, God provided us with sufficient physical food besides the spiritual food. We are convinced that the congregation in Bolivia has learned that joy must never be absent during the Feast. Thus our place of celebration became a place of refuge and protection while the city was in the midst of unprecedented turmoil.

All the planned activities were fulfilled exactly. The services and special music were celebrated as they were planned. We had a talent evening that was very entertaining, we celebrated a night of dance and we shared two Bible studies with questions and answers.

In the place of our refuge, the children and young people amused themselves with computer games while the ladies were busy with meal preparations. On two nights we could sing with karaoke music, and some preferred to see educational biblical films. The protective hand of God continued present with us.

The supermarkets were almost empty, while the public markets had only a few products available and at exorbitant prices. But thanks to our loving Father, the small flock in Bolivia never lacked necessities. And for that reason we were able to rejoice all the more.

Raúl Machicao

Brazil

There were 65 brethren gathered together to celebrate the Feast in Maloca de Moscou, Brazil. Eight members from Guyana also enjoyed spending the Feast with their fellow brethren. Due to some communication difficulty, not all members from Guyana came to Brazil this year. This problem, however, has already been solved for the Feast next year.

Some sermons were delivered in Portuguese and English simultaneously by the speaker. Some speakers spoke in their native Indian language, understood by many of those present. One of the highlights that made the Feast so special was the constant presence of 25 children.

Members have been very careful to prepare to care for drop-in visitors. Even a minister from another denomination came to observe the Feast for one day. Our brethren are setting a good example for their community. People from the village come around to see and spend time with the brethren.

Our brethren from Maloca hold their faith to the highest standard. Members from Guyana also hold such a faith—some traveled by bicycle through the jungle and on dirt roads for over four days. Two couples traveled three days by bicycle with a child and another traveled with a small baby.

God has blessed the Church in this part of the world. Attendance is increasing slowly but steadily. There were two

requests for baptism. Fruits were also everywhere. Two prospective members have



Scenes from the Feast in northern Brazil on the border with Guyana

decided not to work on Saturdays anymore. Members are planning to expand the overcrowded church building for next year. The plan is to accommodate over 100 seats.

Joao Carvalho

British Isles

Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria

Warm autumn sunshine and largely clear skies from the start of the Feast of



Tabernacles once again replaced cold, chilly winds and rain that had set in



Singing in services and at the fun show in the British Isles; above, the family dance

before the Feast. Warm friendship was also obvious among the brethren from all over Britain and visitors from Canada, South Africa, Sweden and the United States gathered to keep the Feast at the Victoria Hall, Grange. The camaraderie and cooperation was an outstanding hallmark of the Festival.

Guest speakers Roy Holladay (president of UCGIA) and Jim Tuck (pastor of several California congregations) gave messages on a world without war, the restoration of Israel, using judgment and wisdom, and seeking immortality. Several messages brought out facets of working effectively together to accomplish the task God has given us. (A link to messages given in Grange may be requested from info@goodnews.org.uk.) Our highest attendance was 133 on the Holy Days.

Those attending the opening service on Friday evening were able to meet the mayor at an informal discussion before the service began. Throughout the Feast, activities were arranged for the youth and young singles, including 10-pin bowling, laser quest, swimming and eating out together.

After an all-day bus tour for Feast-

goers, including a boat trip on Lake Windermere, the Festival film was shown at an evening service. The film gave us the opportunity to meet more of our brethren around the world, and to see the impact of the work of the Church, which was much appreciated.

During the Feast we had one baptism, when Ann Carrier from Carlisle was welcomed into the Body of Christ. Mrs. Carrier attends the Preston congregation whenever she is able.

Most of the members of the National Council were able to spend some valuable time with Mr. Holladay. We were very grateful for the help of so many of those attending, who cheerfully gave of their time and effort in special music, the information desk and so many areas.

Peter Hawkins

Cameroon

Douala

Thirty-five people from all corners of the country attended the Feast in Douala this year.

During the Feast we listened to sermon audiotapes and watched a Festival video with a translation done by our pastor Joel Meeker. The ladies attending prepared all our meals, which we ate all together at the church hall in Douala.

We enjoyed warm fellowship, which was especially enjoyable during our family day activities. The children especially enjoyed the coloring crayons and Feast of Tabernacles coloring books which were provided by brethren from France and the United States. Adult members received notebooks and pens so they could take notes during the services.

We were thankful that for the whole Feast we didn't have a single power or water outage, both of which are common here.

Moise Mabout

Canada

Horseshoe Valley, Ontario

Warm summerlike temperatures greeted us as we arrived in Horseshoe Valley, Ontario, to attend the Feast. The fall colors were at their peak, displaying a spectacular panoramic view for all to see. Our numbers were small, but we soon saw how God's Holy Spirit could make our commitment strong.

We ate a sumptuous Canadian Thanksgiving meal together with our seniors and shared laughter and song with young and old at our Variety Night Show. The youth and their families had a fun-filled activity of bowling and pizza in downtown Barrie and 52 of us shared in the beauty and history of the area on the Miss Midland 30,000 Islands Boat Cruise. The weather had become cold and rainy, but all were warm and cozy

fellowshipping in the enclosed deck.

The first Holy Day saw an attendance of 97, and we continued to be enriched during the week by sermons that encouraged our need and desire for unity. An inspiring picture of God's Kingdom was created for us all on the Last Great Day and as we headed for home, there was no doubt that all of us in our Church family had been spiritually well-fed during our time together.

Judy Desgrosseilliers

Kelowna

Just over 550 Feastgoers were pleasantly surprised as they entered the



Herb Teitgen speaks in Kelowna (Kelowna photos by Jerry and Jean Jantzen)

Okanagan Valley to discover business much as usual. A few weeks before the Feast a fire had ravaged 42,000 acres of the Okanagan Mountain Park, and threatened the city of 100,000. One man described the fire in biblical proportions—flames so intense, a scene so frightening—like the four-horseman of the Apocalypse galloping toward them.

Nevertheless, brethren rejoiced for eight days in the beautiful city as softly falling rain refreshed the ravaged land.

Dave Palmer's opening message characterized the Holy Days as being "like diamonds, which when turned slightly in the light give different reflections of God's plan." He encouraged the brethren to "stay within that light."

At Sunday's Open House, Robert Berendt (pastor of the Edmonton, Alberta, congregation) inspired and motivated the audience by his sermon entitled "A Window of Opportunity." He demonstrated God's love and mercy, showing that He is reluctant to send punishment upon erring humans as in the story of Jonah.

Single father Monty Richardson of Seattle, Washington, who was baptized



Melody, Glyn and Crystal Davies enjoy the Feast in Kelowna

in February, had this to say about the Feast: "God has blessed me so much by bringing me into the wonderful Body of Christ. I have never felt like I

was in the right place before. Now I feel whole. My life has come together—my spirit is no longer scattered. It's like being on a roller coaster that just keeps getting better and better!" Mr. Richardson's enthusiasm was contagious, as he hugged everyone he met.

Fred and Marie Liebenberg (30-year members) from Durban, South Africa, never dreamed they'd have the chance to celebrate the Feast in Canada. Fred said, "We were very impressed and inspired by the music, the choir, the sermons—the whole setup very professional—nothing left to chance. Everyone goes the extra mile to make things work. Though strangers, we were able to make many friends, received brotherly love—felt God's presence throughout the Feast like never before."

Jean Jantzen

Mont-Sainte-Anne, Quebec

Springlike Indian summer weather greeted Feastgoers to this ski resort just outside of Quebec City. The hills were sparkling with yellow and red fall colors.

Visitors came from Holland, Australia, Mexico and across the United States from Florida to California to Minnesota and New York State. Attendance was 253 on the first Holy Day.

Adding to the natural environment of the area were 30,000 migratory snow geese on the shores of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Excellent messages along with a wonderful choir and special music all added to a peaceful and happy Festival atmosphere.

For three days over one weekend 40 members of a French-speaking Sabbath-keeping group from Montreal joined with us. We provided some translation for them. On departure they mentioned their intent to keep the entire eight days with us next year.

A highlight activity for many was the dinner cruise and dance on the St. Lawrence Seaway with wonderful views of the lights of old Quebec and the Frontenac Hotel. Those who went whale watching saw many minke and beluga whales.

On Oct. 16, 32 enjoyed an excellent seniors' brunch, and a variety concert of diverse musical talent



Mont-Sainte-Anne, Quebec, Festival choir directed by Ken Treybig; above, David Dobson addressing the seniors' brunch in Mont-Sainte-Anne (photos by Edwin van Pelt)

gave much enjoyment to the 175 assembled.

A service project for the Family Resources organization of nearby Beaufort saw two overflowing boxes of

toys collected for children of low-income families.

The Last Great Day ended with a light snowfall on the ski hill, signaling time to return home.

Graeme Marshall

Regina, Saskatchewan

This was our third year hosting the Feast in the western Canadian prairie province of Saskatchewan. The first year it was a satellite site, receiving sermons from Kelowna.



Both the young and the young at heart enjoy the Feast in Regina

na. However, Regina is now a separate and established Festival site for the second year. Last year was great and this year's Feast expanded on that memorable foundation. Our combined experience was one of cooperation, caring and giving. Smaller Feast sites have a special opportunity to share activities as a group and since services and lodging were in the same location, it enabled us to connect with others at breakfasts, lunches and often dinners as well as the scheduled events.

Our highest attendance was 105 and it remained in the 90s and 100s on all days with the exception of one. About 10 percent of our number were children, out of which a delightful children's choir developed and performed for us. The adult choir kept gathering volunteers as brethren arrived and we appreciated their contributions to the services and worship of our magnificent God.

Our American brothers were introduced to and survived an evening of Canadian five-pin bowling. Additional activities included the youth lessons, a lovely seniors' luncheon, a social night with a thanksgiving dinner and an impromptu evening with Dale Schurter sharing biblical principles relative to agriculture and health guidelines. This session developed into a full evening

of sharing and fellowship with the brethren wanting more. The annual gathering and sharing with the community continued as in previous years with donations to the local food bank

and the stuffed animals to the children's hospital and area family shelters.

Bill and Carolyn Winner, Dale and Mona Schurter, David Palmer (his wife, Ghyslaina, was not able to be present) and Glen and Connie White were the pastor families attending Regina this year. With the able and willing assistance of those bringing sermonettes, we all shared the privilege of expounding and receiving millennial instruction intrinsic to the coming rule and reign of Jesus Christ. We enjoyed powerful, inspiring and meaningful messages throughout the eight days.

The warm relationship with the hotel staff was appreciated. Many came to say good-bye to various members at the close of the Festival. The catering management had their doubts about a church group observing eight days in the midst of their commercial enterprise, so it was most gratifying to see guarded optimism melt into open smiles and cheerful greetings on a daily basis.

Everyone attending contributed to the success of the Festival in Regina, especially the members of the local congregation. The many details, planning efforts and leg work to make it happen are worthy of ongoing praise.

Glen White

St. John's, Newfoundland

North America's oldest city, St. John's, was host to 66 of God's people as they joined the United family of God in celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles 2003. For over 50 percent of those attending it was their third consecutive year at the St. John's Feast site, making it truly a family reunion with smiling faces and warm embraces.



Feastgoers in St. John's, Newfoundland, take a double-decker bus tour; right, the choir (photos by Ken and Dianne Skorseth)



Each day brethren were treated to local produce, which included candy kisses, Purity biscuits and syrup as well as fresh fruit. Also, each day the speakers sported colorful boutonnières made by Mrs. Blanche Smith with fresh flowers from her home garden.

A highlight of the Feast was the ordination of two deacons to serve the Newfoundland brethren—Samuel T. Parsons of Clarendville, who is the member with the longest standing in the Newfoundland church, and David Squibb of Torbay. Both men have

worked diligently for the Newfoundland church over the years.

Some other highlights were a Canadian Thanksgiving dinner at Foxtrap; Family Day at the Lavrock Centre, which included a catered lunch, canoeing, hiking the trails, miniature golf, a sing-along, craft making, games, a turkey dinner and a family dance; a double-decker bus tour of many historic sites of old St. John's; a boat tour of St. John's harbor, Quidi Vidi village and the waters near Cape Spear (the closest area of North America to the old world); a variety show; and a Seniors' Brunch. Attendance at all activities was at or near 100 percent.

Sermons were inspiring and uplifting, covering such topics as "The Coming Kingdom of God," "The Resurrection," "God's Festival Plan," "The Time of Restoration" and "God's Faithfulness to Us."

Those who gave of their vocal and musical talent added a special touch to the Feast. The choir, under the direction of Floyd Satterwhite, gave us several uplifting and timely selections.

Our highest attendance was 66 for services and 68 for one of our other activities.

The staff of the Best Western Travelers Inn, where services were held, presented the Church with a beautiful earthenware flower vase. The hotel staff signed the accompanying card. They expressed their appreciation and extended a welcome for us to return next year.

The old world charm and the natural beauty of St. John's and the surrounding area provided the backdrop to a rewarding and peaceful Feast. We were a family that formed strong bonds and we look forward to being together for eternity in God's glorious Kingdom!

Ellsworth Stanley and David Smith

Chile

Calafquén

On the peaceful shores of Lake Calafquén, 800 kilometers (500 miles) south of Santiago near the Villarrica Volcano, in a climate of joyful harmony and comradeship, 76 Chilean brethren enjoyed a beautiful Feast of Tabernacles.

Due to the difficult economic situation this year, we decided to have this site to facilitate the attendance of all the brethren from the south of Chile, although we also had some visitors from other places like Santiago. All these brethren felt blessed by the opportunity to have this closer and less expensive site accessible to them.

The powerful hand of God blessed us in all the plans and activities. We had sunny and warm days (which is

not usual for this time of year in this region) so that we could have two weddings outdoors.

During the Feast we had services in the mornings and in the afternoons we had various activities like a talent afternoon, a Ladies' Night for the Spokesman's Club, two weddings, a



Two weddings took place at the Feast in Chile

breakfast for the ladies, a children's party and conversations around the fireplaces in the different cabins.

Jaime Gallardo

Colombia

Santa Marta

This year we went again to Santa Marta, on the northern Caribbean coast. Most of the brethren took the bus to the Feast site. In spite of the turmoil in our country, all the members were able to attend the Feast without any problem. This is possible only with God's intervention.

We had a lot of different and inspiring sermon topics. The highest attendance was 111 people. We had the opportunity to share with each other various activities such as dancing, snorkeling, beach games and a spontaneous talent show. At the beginning of the Feast we had some get-acquainted games that helped us to have a very nice and unforgettable Feast season. On top of all this, four people were baptized. This is great!

Eduardo Hernandez

Estonia

Tartu

Nestled between Scandinavia and the expansive land of Russia lies the small nation of Estonia. A small group



Most of the Feastgoers in Estonia (photo by Hazel Lambert)

of brethren met in the city of Tartu to picture the Kingdom of God—seven from Estonia, two from Lithuania and seven from the United States (two of whom are temporarily living in Moscow).

Since the law of God is one of the four components of a kingdom, the connection between observing God's law and the resultant happiness of all mankind was continually demonstrated from Bible prophecies. John Lambert gave four sermons with this theme. Henrikas Klovas from Lithuania gave two excellent sermons about the practical aspects of reaching the apex of God's Kingdom.

The entire group participated together in most of the activities and meals. This gave everyone an opportunity to get acquainted and form strong friendships. The highlight for everyone was an overnight trip to Saaremaa, a beautiful island off the coast of Estonia. A sense of serenity and peacefulness was extant. For most of the Estonians, this was their first visit to the island. During the Soviet occupation, a special visa was required to go there. Much pleasure and laughter during the bus ride came from swapping idioms of the different languages and singing Estonian and American songs.

Everyone pictured the Kingdom of God to the fullest.

Johnnie Lambert

France

Nouan-le-Fuzelier

This year 67 people from nine countries attended the Feast of Tabernacles in Nouan-le-Fuzelier, France. The weather was unusually sunny, with several pleasantly warm days. One of the high points of the Feast was the warm fellowship. Since lodging, meals and services were all in one site, there was much time available all through the day for getting acquainted or reacquainted. Many sermons and sermonettes centered on the topic of renewal and restoration—pointing us toward the time when Christ will return and restore all things.

Festival activities included a family activity day where Festival attendees could learn the popular French outdoor game of *pétanque*, as well as tasting specialties from Martinique prepared by brethren from that Caribbean island. Daily excursions left the site most afternoons for visits to some of the most beautiful Renaissance chateaux in France including Chambord, Cheverny,

Chenonceau, Villandry and Blois, as well as visiting the final residence of



Feastgoers in France visit the Renaissance chateaux of Chambord (photos by Joel Meeker)

Leonardo da Vinci in Amboise.

French-speaking members participated in the annual association meeting, as well as in a special interactive Bible study on the topic of Christian priorities.

The number of international transferees dropped sharply this year, no doubt on concerns over the tense international situation. However, all visitors were welcomed warmly not only by their brethren, but by the people of France in general. We hope to have more visitors next year, as this makes our Feast of Tabernacles much more enjoyable and encouraging.

Joel Meeker

Germany

Schluchsee

The Feast of Tabernacles in Schluchsee was a tremendous success.



One hundred and ninety brethren gathered from seven different countries to enjoy spiritually uplifting messages and lots of fun and fellowship. Although a bit cool, the weather was sunny throughout the Feast, allowing brethren a beautiful view of the countryside.

The opening service this year was highlighted by several scripture read-

ings and beautiful music, creating a dignified and festive beginning. After the opening services brethren were served a "welcoming drink" to enjoy while they renewed old friendships and began new ones. Services were held in German with simultaneous English translations provided.

Feast activities included a bus tour in the Black Forest to an open-air historical museum and a clock museum, an afternoon of volleyball, children's party, talent show and family dance evening. Teens and young adults came together for an afternoon of kegling (similar to bowling) and pizza. This year the senior citizens were invited to a special Bible study and enjoyed coffee and cake afterwards.

Throughout the Feast brethren heard messages about the coming of the Kingdom of God, the importance of passing God's truth along to younger generations, victory of light over darkness, the importance of answering God's calling, the hope of God's Kingdom and the uniqueness of God's truth and plan throughout the centuries. Two interactive Bible studies were also conducted for the teens and young adults.

Since brethren in the German- and Dutch-speaking areas are scattered, the Blessing of the Little Children ceremony took place during the Feast. It



Germany: Pierre and Phillip Adcock and Garrett Fenchel admire a falcon; children sing wearing the spiritual armor they made in youth classes; Paul Kieffer holds an alp horn



was inspiring to witness three children receive God's blessing. There was also one baptism that was conducted during the Feast.

Once again children (ages 3 to 12) enjoyed specially prepared Feast classes. This year the children learned about the "Armor of God." In addition to learning the spiritual meaning of each piece of armor, the children were able to construct their own "armor." On the Last Great Day the children, dressed in "full armor," went up on stage and the

congregation sang "Onward Christian Soldiers." Everybody went home feeling spiritually refreshed and rejuvenated.

Lisa Fenchel

Ghana

Accra, Agona and Kumasi

Several hundred Ghanaians and a few visitors from elsewhere gathered together to celebrate the 2003 Feast of Tabernacles at three different Feast sites in this West African nation.

As usual, the Feast was held in both the capital city of Accra and Ghana's second city, Kumasi, which is the capital of the Ashanti Region. The third site this year, always held in the southwest of the country, was in the small village of Agona, home to a few dozen members who meet there each week for Sabbath services. This time the members there hosted members from Elmina, Cape Coast and Takoradi.

Melvin Rhodes, Ghana's senior pastor, spoke twice at all three sites. With him was his wife, Diane, and their three adult children, together



with son-in-law Mike Kubik, who was visiting Ghana for the first time. This was the first time in over 13 years that the whole Rhodes family was able to be in Ghana together, visiting the country in which they lived for seven years. Also in attendance from outside of Ghana were Nigerian Oludare Akimbo, together with his wife and son.

Members attending shared meals together and enjoyed many hours of games, both indoors and outdoors.

For most of the members it was only their third or fourth Feast. The Feast of Tabernacles has now become firmly established as a highlight of the year for hundreds of people who had never even heard of it a few years ago.

Melvin Rhodes

Guatemala

Antigua

Greetings from Guatemala! Again we had one of the most beautiful Feasts of Tabernacles and Last Great Days.

Each day of the Feast was special, and each one of the Guatemalans and foreign visitors helped to make the Feast a great experience.

With 483 in attendance, the collaboration and the enthusiasm that everyone felt helped us to enjoy all the activities. As one man we shared everything from the food to our dreams, our problems and our desire to help each other with our prayers throughout the year.

We had many activities. There was a breakfast for the elders, a very nice talent night and a Latin American night that showed, in video and live music

played by six of our members, all the places from Mexico to Chile where the Feast was held. The children really enjoyed everything at the children's party, from the gifts to the hamburgers. We also had a Ladies' Night with the Spokesman's Club and a Ladies' Breakfast that was very interesting.

Over all, the sermons and sermonettes inspired us and showed God's plan for all humanity and how we have to walk through this society, which is getting worse every day.

We said good-bye with much hope, faith and solidarity with all the people, no matter whether they were from near or far, always fasting and praying for them. And always begging: "Thy kingdom come!"

Luis Mundo Tello

Esquipulas

It was a very special moment when the sun went down behind the green

Esquipulas, Guatemala

mountains that surround the historic town of Esquipulas in Guatemala. At that moment, we felt the joy of this year's Feast.

The hugs, kisses and handshakes knew no national or linguistic distinction. The Americans and Central Americans all shared the same nationality and language, that is God's nationality and language. God gave us a cooling cloud cover over the town during the entire Feast, providing a pleasant climate.

The services were filled with messages of hope, and got better every day. Every hymn was sung heartily, and every activity was a success. On Sunday we had a barbecue, along with songs, stories, jokes and great happiness. On Monday we visited the ancient Mayan city of Copan, in Honduras, and we learned a little more about how our



Girls having fun in Esquipulas

Mesoamerican predecessors used to live.

We had several youth dances and one family dance. The young children enjoyed a wide range of activities during the Feast, including special music and illustrated booklets about the Feast. They had a children's afternoon with



A group photo at the Feast in France

toys and gifts. We also enjoyed soccer games with our brethren.

We had seven baptisms, which shows how our Latin American young people are giving the best years of their lives to God. The highest attendance was 209. It was a Feast full of enjoyable moments. The Foy family visited us from Kansas, and discovered that they were expecting their first baby. No doubt for them as well as for all those who were there, it will be a most memorable Feast. Just as David wrote in one of his Psalms: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head..."

Carlos Eduardo Parada

Italy

Principina Terra (Grosseto)

After the Feast we went back home only physically, because our hearts are still with all the other brethren who left Italy and have safely returned to their respective homes. Our hearts also



Dr. Mario Bianchi (right), the owner of the hotel hosting the Feast in Italy, expresses appreciation to Carmelo Anastasi and the UCG members (photo by Loma Di Vita)

remained in Principina Terra (Grosseto), where for eight wonderful days we rejoiced with God and His Son, Jesus Christ, in Christian fellowship with brethren from various countries. There were 387 participants in all.

Many have written words of appreciation for how much is accomplished by so few Church members in Italy. Truly our little group draws great motivation also from the international participation of deeply converted members and ministers. We prepare the Feast in view of the precious encouragement that comes from the personal presence of members from other countries. This makes God's Feast even more memorable and meaningful for us.

We were given very inspiring messages concerning the wonderful plan of God for the salvation of mankind. The special music and the choir at the Feast were expressions of genuine worship towards the Creator. All participants experienced and manifested the unity of the Spirit and the faith that is spreading more and more within the UCGIA.

Cultural tours to world-famous cities like Florence and Rome, as well as the recreational and fellowship activities, offered the opportunity to enrich the Feast days with fond memories. We saw the children rejoicing, singing and

dancing in unity with their parents.

Our presence in the province of Grosseto was noticed. Many expressed positive comments and welcomed our Feast celebration. Particularly, the musical association Amici del Bel Canto (the Friends of Music) offered us a concert as a sign of gratitude towards us for celebrating the Feast in their beloved country. The National Council of UCG-Italy formally expressed its thanks and appreciation to both the musical association and Dr. Mario Bianchi, the owner of the hotel hosting the Feast.

In returning his thanks and appreciation to all members of UCGIA, Dr. Bianchi said: "I am a Catholic. But it is evident that all of you are special persons. What has made a deep impression on me is the fact that you are various families from different nations, yet you treat one another as being part of the same great family. I would like to thank you for your beautiful example. May one day all peoples on earth live as you do."

These words prove the good witness that was truly given by our brethren, in compliance with Jesus' commandment, which says: "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

During the eight days of the Feast there truly was an atmosphere enriched with brotherly love, human warmth and unity in the Spirit of faith in the true God. The Italian brethren could not have received blessings more precious than those. We give our heartfelt thanks for the encouragement and generous help that was given by all Feast participants to support the work and the publications of the Church of God in Italy.

Carmelo Anastasi

Jamaica

Ocho Rios

UCG's Jamaican brethren once again rolled out the red carpet to host an uplifting Feast of Tabernacles at the Renaissance Jamaica Grande Resort in Ocho Rios.

Attendance reached 512 this year—an all-time high for a UCG Jamaica site. The boost in numbers came mostly from a large Texan contingent. Approximately 100 members from the



Children's choir sings in Jamaica (photo by Jim Franks)

two Houston congregations, and several others from Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, Corpus Christi and other Texas cities, joined Jamaican members and

visitors from the Caribbean, United Kingdom, Canada and other U.S. congregations for eight days of feasting, fellowship and spiritual food.

Messages explored the significance of water symbolism in the Bible, discussed overcoming human nature, highlighted the need for Christ's return and reiterated the need for young people to continue the legacy of God's way.

Musical worship also proved to be a highlight. Soloists, visiting vocalists, local youth and adult choirs, a children's choir, a combined Festival choir and a variety of instrumentalists were so eager to glorify God with their melodious talents that each service included two special music selections, to the joy of many Feastgoers—and, no doubt, also to God.

Wednesday night's "Jam-Tex" Fun Show entitled "El Paso Pon Di River" gave members another opportunity to share their gifts. So many toddlers, teens, seniors and those in between volunteered to model, dance, sing and recite that the show lasted about three hours. Members also got to know each other at teen and young adult Bible studies and a Family Fun Day.

For the Last Great Day, those Jamaican members staying at apartments near the hotel were able to join other members for a special group lunch, ending the Festival on a high note.

Thanks to all the hosting and visiting brethren who made this site such a joy to attend.

Janice Lynn Mather

Kenya

Mombasa

The beautiful coast of the Indian Ocean near Mombasa, Kenya, provided a millennial setting for the Feast this year. There were 145 East African brethren from Kenya and Tanzania who were joined by 18 brethren from the western United States. The inspiring messages, beautiful weather and family-oriented activities combined with Kenya's amazing beauty to give everyone a personal foretaste of what God's Kingdom holds for humanity.

On the first Holy Day, Antonio Ndung'u and David Gichuru were the first in the region to be ordained as deacons in United. Also, 25 brethren, who had been counseling throughout the year, were baptized in the ocean by John Elliott, the senior pastor of East Africa, assisted by Rick Stafford, an elder serving in Portland, Oregon.

An excursion through the national marine reserve in glass-bottom boats gave attendees inspiring views of the tropical world under the sea. A second excursion took them through the African jungle wildlife of Haller Park. A third excursion gave everyone a tour of the highlights of the city of Mombasa.



Kenya: (from top) John Elliott performs laying on of hands after baptizing 25 new members (photo by Ed Dowd); Feastgoers with a large tortoise at Haller Park (photo by RaeAnn Dowd); group shot (photo by Amy Anderson)

basia. Family Day on the beach was a joyous occasion of races and games that had everyone rolling in laughter.

On the Last Great Day, 18 children were blessed in the Blessing of the Little Children ceremony. The Feast experience was enjoyed by approximately one third of those who attend in Kenya and Tanzania, and many more hope to be able to attend next year. The East African members send you their greetings along with their thanks to all who made this Feast an unforgettable experience.

Ed and RaeAnn Dowd

Malawi

Eighty-four brethren attended the second Feast of Tabernacles on Lake Malawi. Victor and



Scenes from Malawi (photos by Victor Kubik)

Beverly Kubik came from the United States and spent the first half of the Feast giving sermons on the Kingdom of God, God's grace and the importance of joy and rejoicing.

A highlight of the Feast was a barbecue and variety program that included skits, musical numbers and scripture recitation by children. Also the entire group visited a nearby crocodile farm Monday afternoon. On two evenings open discussions were held with the Kubiks on subjects ranging from the Bible to Christian living.

The Church in Malawi has grown from two in 1996 to the current 84 meeting in the congregations of Lilongwe and Blantyre.

Victor Kubik

Mexico

Queretaro

This year 348 brethren, including 13 U.S. brethren and four brethren from Guatemala, attended the Feast in the beautiful, colonial city of Queretaro. The weather was very nice, warm and sunny most of the time, with a few cloudy days, and some rain during a few nights.

This contributed to very nice temperatures that promoted Christian fellowship by the swimming pool and in the hotel rooms where the brethren shared with each other their loving hospitality.

There were various activities, such as a Mexican night with a dinner and dance, which many of the brethren attended with their typical Mexican costumes, to the delight of our visiting brethren. There was also a children's party with clowns and McDonald's lunch box and gifts to the delight of all the children. Many of the brethren had the opportunity to share their singing talents at a karaoke night; and the young people also had some sports activities and other social opportunities where they got together and shared their happiness with each other.

The senior citizens also had the opportunity to have a very nice Brazilian-style dinner, with about 50 elderly people and 27 other brethren, including the Feast coordinator and his wife, Larry and Blanca Roybal, and all the Mexican ministers and their wives.

Most of the brethren had breakfast together early in the morning during the whole Feast, and also had the opportunity to have lunch together on the first day of the Feast and on the Last Great Day. The other days they invited each other in small groups and went out to eat at lunch and dinner. All this resulted in great Christian fellowship, bonding all of us together in true Christian love for each other.

God blessed the Queretaro Feast site with abundant spiritual food: Sabbath school for the children throughout the whole Feast, Bible studies every day, and 11 church services (including the



Mexico Feast coordinator Larry and Blanca Roybal; Martha Barragán and Graciela de la Parra; deacons and deaconesses ordained: Gerardo Juárez, Jorge Ríos, Yulun Langarica, Roberto and Elsa Ontiveros, Manuel and Hilda Núñez and Ana Cruza

opening night service), special music and the Feast video, which set the theme of the Feast, "Being About Our Father's Business."

All the Bible studies, sermonettes and sermons were very timely, moving and inspiring, focusing on various aspects of the meaning of the Feast, on social problems of our present day society, and on how to put into practice the lessons that the Feast provides us.

The highlights of the Feast were nine baptisms and the ordaining of four deacons and four deaconesses. All in all, God blessed us with our best Feast ever!

Pablo Dimakis

New Zealand

Napier

Ninety-five brethren from New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Great Britain warmly received the newest Kiwi Feast site in Napier. Located on the eastern seacoast of New Zealand's North Island, Napier is a popular year-round resort for Kiwis and international visitors alike. Sunny spring weather was the norm as the Feast progressed.

Doug Johnson, pastor of the Mansfield and Canton, Ohio, congregations, and his wife, Janel, joined us for the first half of the Feast before traveling on to Noosa in Australia. As the international guest speaker, his messages focused on the depth of the hope that the Millennium represents for us and all of humanity—past, present and future. He also emphasized the important reality of our personal commitment toward the standards of the coming Kingdom of God in our present lives. Mrs. Johnson's fine vocal and piano talents were much appreciated by everyone.

Other Feast messages focused on the coming utopia as compared with the present dystopia of Satan's world, angels, priests in the Kingdom, the coming New Jerusalem and the comparison of this temporary life and booths.

Indoor rock climbing attracted half the congregation, with active partici-

pants ranging from 5-year-olds up to those in their 60s. Various groups went deep-sea fishing in Hawke's Bay, snowboarding on volcanic mountains near Lake Taupo, horseback riding and on excursions to a gannet bird colony overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

A luncheon for "Over-50s" brethren and their spouses at the historic Mission Estate Winery, with vistas overlooking vineyards and Hawke's Bay was a delight. The Napier/Hawke's Bay region has over 30 vineyards and offers many winery tours. The annual Feast dinner was held in the Napier War Memorial Centre, where daily services were also held. The hall boasts a near 180-degree view of Hawke's Bay and the beachfront. Brethren truly enjoyed the natural setting, the fellowship and a deeper focus on the coming Kingdom of God.

Jeff Caudle

Nigeria

I've not been one who says every year, "Best Feast ever." My first Feast, in 1957, was really great. However, this was definitely my best Feast ever in Nigeria,



The group in Nigeria; above, Richard and Faustina Dua from Ghana helped in Nigeria; members from Sabbath Church of God joining with UCG

both spiritually and physically.

A major blessing for me spiritually was the fact that I got to listen to two sermons, seven split sermons and five sermonettes that were given by others. In years past in Nigeria I gave all of the sermons and Bible studies. Richard Dua, a pastor in Ghana, and his wife, Faustina, joined us in Nigeria and he gave excellent sermons in the afternoon of both Holy Days. I gave three sermons, a split sermon, a Bible study and a youth study; but seven of our Nigerian members gave split sermons, and they were all excellent and meaty. It was wonderful to hear such inspired messages.

On the physical side, we had running water and electricity for almost all of the Feast, a first for me in Nigeria! My wife, Lucretia, prayed for cloudy days to keep the heat down, and her prayers were answered for most of the Feast.

We thanked God every day. Our high attendance was 120 on the morning of the Last Great Day.

Ten members of the Sabbath Church of God came to keep the Feast with us. It was their first Feast of Tabernacles, and they expressed a desire for all of them to become members of the United Church of God and for all of them to keep the feasts from now on. They have more than 400 members.

Members in the United States provided funds for Nigerian members to have catered meals on the Holy Days, an excursion to a nearby geological area of interest, 14 large print Bibles for some of the elderly members, and 15 copies of *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (given to the speakers—many of them quoted from *Vine's* during their messages).

Even though the members in Nigeria save their Festival tithe, because income there is so low, it would be impossible for members in Nigeria to have a Festival site without assistance from outside. The members constantly expressed their gratitude for the generosity of the members in the United States and over and over asked me to thank them. LifeNets provided reading

sent a donation to be used for the children's party. We used the donation to buy a variety of candies, snacks, drinks, and the much-anticipated cake.

A special note of thanks is expressed to the children of the Loma Linda, California, congregation, for the love shown to the brethren in Peru. They collected funds to make it possible for six people to attend the Feast this year.

Our Feast had a real international flavor. We welcomed brethren from Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Germany, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Manuel Quijano/Ralph Levy

Philippines

Baguio City

Baguio City was once again one of three Feast sites for the United Church of God in the Philippines. For the third consecutive year, the services for the Feast of Tabernacles were held at the conference hall of "Ang Ating Tahanan" grounds of the Girl Scout of the Philippines. The hall has a capacity limit of about 150.

We were expecting a maximum attendance of about 110, but we already hit that number in the afternoon of the first day. The attendance grew each day so much so that by the Last Great Day, we almost reached the capacity limit when our highest attendance hit 147! This attendance was even greater than what we had two years ago when Baguio City became

the combined Feast Site for both our Luzon and our Visayan brethren here in the Philippines (our highest attendance then was 139). God did not just bless us with good attendance this year but also with inspiring messages that encouraged the Feastgoers to seriously make this Feast their most spiritual Feast ever. For the first time, we had special music in all our services from the first day to the Last Great Day. We were all

brethren themselves to the delight and enjoyment of everyone present

The Feast ended with all the brethren feeling inspired, spiritually rejuvenated and eagerly looking forward to the next Feast of Tabernacles, and even more, to what it truly pictures: the establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Rey Evasco

Davao City

The Davao festival site was attended by more than 300 members and affiliates from the 15 congregations in Mindanao and a few other families from Luzon. We also had guests from the United States—the Mortiers from Oshkosh, Wisconsin; Daniel Frayer



The children's choir in Baguio City; above, brethren singing a Filipino folk song (photos by Rey Evasco)



Davao City, Philippines

from Albuquerque, New Mexico; and David Rogers from Denver, Colorado. The highest attendance was 305. Services were held at the Region 11 RELC (Regional Educational Learning Center) compound of the Department of Education in Davao City, where the Davao congregation meets for weekly Sabbath services. The main meeting room was the Diamond Hall (with a

We would like to extend our gratitude to the home office and certain of our brethren in the United States for their generosity in the form of financial assistance, donated Bibles, used clothing, books, toys and other gifts. Thank you very much!

*Daniel Roy
Macaraeg*

Iloilo City

Once again, the beautiful Punta Villa Resort in Iloilo City became a temporary dwelling place for 103 Feastgoers from the central part of the Philippines. Foreign guests this year included five from the United States, four from Canada and six from Sabah, Malaysia.

The Feast started out with the tradi-



Group shot and activities in Iloilo (photos by Raul Villacote and Samuel Siopan)

seating capacity of 250), while the Pearl room (with a seating capacity of 100) had a video hook-up and a big-screen TV for the rest of the membership who needed to have the services translated into Cebuano, the local dialect.

We had the blessing of good weather, inspiring messages, beautiful flowers, uplifting special music, eight baptisms, two weddings, a 62 percent increase in the Holy Day offering and 54 people who attended for the first time during a *Good News* public Bible lecture held on the second day of the Feast! We also had a colorful variety show, the first Ladies' Night for the newly-revived Spokesman and Graduate Club, a family day at the beach and various activities for the kids, teens, singles and seniors.

Those baptized were: Annaliza Arceo, Josepilar Jr. and Nelia Bermudez, Simplicio Cambare, Eliza Curato, Lorna Dagani and Ely and Virginia Fernandez. The two couples married were Jeb and Laurie (Macaraeg) Mortier and Daniel and Paulette (Cebrian) Frayer.

tional welcome on the opening night with Florante Siopan giving the opening message about what to expect for the eight days. It clearly emphasized the rejoicing, enthusiasm, love and service necessary to experience the best Feast in which God would be the great and loving Host.

The brethren were very grateful to the home office for sending David Baker, the senior pastor of UCG in the Philippines. Together with his wife and two children, he inspired the brethren spiritually.

The Festival video, "Being About Our Father's Business," generated positive comments, seeing that everyone has his or her share in the work of God in preaching the truth of the gospel to the whole world.

Feast activities this year included the Family Day outing at the beach, Youth Day and Seniors' Night. The highlight was the Family Entertainment and Dance Night, where brethren presented different numbers.

The brethren and the children were also treated with the love gift sent by our concerned brethren from the Unit-

ed States. These consisted of assorted toys and school materials, as well as reading glasses donated by a generous couple from Japan through LifeNets International.

The Church received very positive comments from the resort personnel. One was heard telling his fellow employee that the United Church of God is a well-behaved group, with neat and happy people including their children. He said he had not experienced this with other groups who also used the resort's facilities.

The Feast ended with all the brethren feeling nourished and strengthened spiritually. It was a great and fruitful one.

Florante Siopan

St. Lucia

Rodney Bay

The Feast this year was held at the sprawling Rex Resorts complex of three adjoining hotels—Royal, Rex and Papillion—in the popular Rodney Bay area. We stayed at the Rex and Papillion and services were held at the conference center of the Royal. Our high attendance was 137.

Brethren came from seven islands in the Caribbean—St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. Kitts, Dominica, Barbados, St. Vincent and St. Lucia—as well as Canada and the United States. The tropical environment was very relaxing, as it gave us a small foretaste of the world tomorrow. However, the overall highlight was the messages, both by word and song. We had timely messages on preparation for the future. Several commented afterwards that they were returning home with a greater sense of urgency. We very much appreciated the midweek visit by Council member Jim Franks and his wife, Sharon. And many commented on how inspiring the special music was from such a small group of people, yet with so much talent.

The brethren had the opportunity to participate in three organized activities: 1) A Welcome Night hosted by the local brethren. We were entertained by a local folk band and dancers. 2) A land



St. Lucia children's choir

and sea cruise to the region of the island called Soufrière with a tour of the Diamond Waterfalls and Botanical Gardens. 3) A trip to the Maria Island nature reserve to catch a glimpse of rare and exotic wildlife.

After the Feast ended and most of the brethren left, several of the hotel staff commented that things were not the same. A couple of them stated, "It just seems dead around here since the church people have gone."

Well done, good and faithful servants, in shining the light of God. This has indeed been a memorable Feast.

Arnold J. Hampton

South Africa

Uvongo

Services for the Feast in South Africa were held for the ninth consecutive year in the Civic Centre hall of the Natal south coast town of Uvongo. The weather varied from beautiful sunny days to partly cloudy with some wind and light rain. Most members stayed in a large apartment complex right on the seafloor and enjoyed daily sightings of whales and dolphins.

The highest attendance was 315 and included visitors from the United States, Canada, England, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and Zambia.



Feastgoers in South Africa

Sermons with a recurring theme of being true to our calling and God's truth

were given by Victor Kubik, Bruce Dean, Bill Jahns, Rick Shabi, André van Belkum and Neil Becker.

Activities included go-carting for the teenagers, air flips in a light plane piloted by Eric de Campos, a barbecue and various sports and children's games at a local farmers' center, a family dance and a luncheon for seniors at a lodge situated right on the edge of a 1,000 foot drop into a spectacular river gorge.

Some members ventured out to sea in locally owned and piloted ski-boats and were rewarded with a good catch of tuna.

Neil Becker

Togo

Kpalimé

This year 32 people were present for the Feast of Tabernacles in Kpalimé,

Togo, about two hours north of the capital city of Lomé. Lodging and services were held in a school complex complete with dormitories. The director of the school kindly allowed us the use of the facilities free of charge, a wonderful blessing. We prepared our own meals collectively and ate together each day.

Our pastor, Joel Meeker, was with us for the inaugural-evening service and for the first Holy Day, on which we had a church service and a Bible study. He then had to leave for France. The rest of the Feast we had sermons in French on

Not Easy to Find the Feast!

Halfway through the Feast in Togo, UCG deacon Kossi Fiaboé received a call from his wife, who is not a member. She said that two men from the Ivory Coast had phoned and wanted to know where they could keep the Feast of Tabernacles. They were given directions to find the Feast site in the town of Kpalimé, and upon their arrival told their story.

In 1995, a group of people were receiving church literature and studying together. One of their number had just completed the Bible Correspondence Course after having received *The Plain Truth* for seven years, when suddenly everything stopped. All communication dried up.

After a time they decided they couldn't "stay without God," so they began looking for contacts in West Africa. After several years of writing letters and making inquiries, they finally found the address of a deacon with WCG in Bénin, three countries to the east of them on the West African coast. They corresponded with him by mail and in May of this year asked if they could come to the Feast of Tabernacles in Bénin, to which he replied that they could. Not having a phone at his home, the WCG deacon gave them the phone number of a UCG member in Cotonou, and told them to call there to make contact, but under no circumstances were they to tell the UCG member why they were coming! Shortly afterward this deacon died.

Just before the Feast, the two men started out on their long road trip to Bénin. When they arrived in Lomé, Togo, the country just before Bénin, they phoned the UCG member's home only to be told that he was out (the whole family had gone to the Feast in Togo). The travelers went all the way to Cotonou in Bénin before they learned that the UCG members were in the country through which they had just traveled. So they spent the night in Cotonou and then retraced their steps back to Lomé, still hoping to find Church members keeping the Feast.

They didn't know who to contact in Lomé, so they called a number of different churches in the phone book, but none of them knew anything about WCG. As they were making calls from a phone booth, the attendant (there are attendants at phone booths in much of Africa) suddenly asked them, "Are you looking for Mr. Armstrong's church?" They replied that they were. "I know the one in charge of the local group, and even know his phone number," replied the attendant. She knew Mr. Fiaboé's home number!

Though Mrs. Fiaboé, they were able to contact the UCG members keeping the Feast in Kpalimé. After several more hours of travel north, they were finally able to meet with the group that was celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. They may not have known exactly whom they were looking for, but God did!

Kossi Fiaboé and Joel Meeker

cassette tapes. In the evenings we had socials and studied the Bible together.

We had a wonderful surprise halfway through the Feast when two men from Abidjan in the Ivory Coast



Brethren in Togo toast to the Kingdom (photo by Joel Meeker)

found where we were and asked if they could come to celebrate the Feast with us. We were overjoyed! These men had been in contact with our previous association and had finished the Bible Correspondence Course, but then all contact just stopped. They kept looking until they found people who believed as they did!

Kossi Fiaboé and Joel Meeker

Tonga

Greetings from the Kingdom of Tonga in the South Pacific. Twenty-three brethren attended the Feast of Tabernacles, including one from Canada and two from Australia.

This was the best Feast we have ever had during the 35 years we have observed this wonderful time. We were blessed with inspiring and uplifting sermons, along with some great and wonderful activities, which everyone enjoyed.

Festival activities including a welcoming barbecue, with local ingredients and delicious food. One of the highlights was a special night at the Dateline Hotel where everyone enjoyed a buffet dinner, dancing and watching the traditional Tongan dancing. We also had a family and sports day, in which everyone got involved and enjoyed.

It was another happy and wonderful Feast with bonds created between the brethren, spiritually and physically. It was sad to say farewell, but it is great to look forward to the coming Kingdom that God is preparing for us!

Heamasi Ta'ufu'ou

United States

Bend-Redmond, Oregon

Nearly a thousand Feastgoers enjoyed the 2003 Feast of Tabernacles in the Bend-Redmond area of Central Oregon. Attendance peaked at 939 the first day of the Feast, marking the third year in a row that attendance far exceeded registration figures (775).

Unseasonably cool weather at the beginning of the Feast gave way to warm, sunny days later in the week. Over 600 enjoyed another fine family fun show, which has become a popular tradition here. Other popular activities included a barber shop concert, dinner train and a Western chuckwagon din-

ner and Western music show by a talented family that has performed for the president and appeared on Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion* radio show during the past year. A senior citizens' social attended by 248 featured a special version of "Name That Tune." Teens, young adults and singles also enjoyed special activities.

Many commented favorably on the sermons and the Festival video. We also enjoyed a wide variety of special music. The Holy Day offerings were generous, with a larger offering on the last day.

The Feast was featured in my article that appeared on the religion page of the Bend newspaper on the opening day of the Feast.

Larry J. Walker

Branson, Missouri

Approximately 1,400 brethren rejoiced before God at a wonderful spiritual Feast in the beautiful Ozark Mountains at Branson. The highlight of the Feast was undoubtedly the magnificent spiritual banquet that was set for all of us. Many positive comments were voiced about the messages and the video. All the messages were tuned to helping us sharpen our vision of the Kingdom of God and what we need to do in the meantime.

The weather was spectacular, with highs in the 70s and a couple of rain showers after midnight two nights. High attendance was on the first Holy Day, when attendance reached 1,368. This included about 35 to 40 very enthusiastic people attending their first Feast of Tabernacles. Attendance stayed fairly steady throughout the Feast as members seemed to not want to miss any of the messages.

On Sunday night members enjoyed a Family Dance with music for all ages and backgrounds. On Monday the teens enjoyed a special activity at beautiful Table Rock State Park, beside beautiful Table Rock Lake. This year's family day, held at North Beach Park beside Lake Taneycomo, was a big success, attended by almost 500 brethren.

Several activities for younger singles, ranging from hiking and biking to miniature golf and go-carts, were held, while other activities, including a cave tour and a cookout, were held for the singles in the middle group. All were well attended and enjoyed by those attending.

Thursday, the senior citizens enjoyed a buffet luncheon, with entertainment and bingo, which many described as the "best ever."

Following the Feast several of the motel owners commented about how much they enjoy having "the church" group there. Several wanted to vacate their hotels of all but "church members" during the Feast. Personnel at the Baldknobber Theater were making friends with our members and a couple of them asked questions about the Church and our beliefs.

Michael Blackwell

Escondido, California

This year 1,005 brethren assembled together in the lovely performing arts center of Escondido to hear encourag-

ing and uplifting messages regarding the coming Kingdom of God. The messages stretched our minds and hearts from "What Kind of an Employee Is God Looking For?" to a dazzling PowerPoint presentation of "The New Heavens and New Earth" on the Last Great Day. This year's special night-time Bible study featured Cecil Maranville presenting a prophetic topic of much interest regarding "What Does the Bible Say About a Place of Safety?"

The Escondido Feast site once again enjoyed its predictable warm but pleas-



Escondido choir backs up hymns (photo by Thomas Black)

ant early autumn temperatures. This city lies in an interior valley of Northern San Diego County. Within 30 to 40 minutes in each direction you can either be headed into pine-clad mountains, on a sandy beach, touring the major attractions of San Diego or walking through the vineyards of nearby Temecula. Each year nearly 40 to 50 percent of our people stay in the nearby beach communities of Oceanside or Carlsbad and commute to services.

While the metropolitan San Diego area has world-class attractions, the primary attraction at the Escondido Feast site rightfully remains the Festival activities themselves and the brethren. Throughout the course of the week, our people were able to experience young adult and teen drop-in socials, a teen beach party and a senior citizens' banquet. The most popular event continues to be the old-fashioned family day picnic at nearby Felicita Park that brings all the brethren together no matter how old or how young.

Next year, Escondido will once again be an official site for the Feast of Tabernacles 2004. While seemingly we experienced the "best Feast yet," we look forward to what God has in store for us to learn and experience next year in this pleasant valley city.

Robin Webber

Hagerstown, Maryland

Another spiritually successful Feast of Tabernacles took place for the second year in the Clarion Conference Center in Hagerstown, Maryland. Surrounded by beautiful fall foliage covering this portion of the Appalachian Mountains, the Hagerstown Feast site was a wonderful venue to observe God's command to keep His Feast for eight days.

With a high attendance of 870, brethren from all over the United States convoked to hear inspiring and instructive messages from God's ministers. Paul Luecke spoke on opening night about what is on God's mind during the Feast and how to have a proper focus throughout the Feast.

Other topics covered in the sermons were a contrast of the world today with the world tomorrow, God's "road map" to peace, how God will cause people to obey His law in the world tomorrow, a mid-Feast exam on how well we had kept the first four days of the Feast and how discrimination will be ended in the world tomorrow. A sermon geared to the youth explained how to prepare for God's Kingdom. How salvation will be offered to all was explained on the Last Great Day, as well as an

inspiring message on the last three chapters of Revelation with the aid of pictures, which demonstrated the ultimate fate of planet earth. The Feast video was also powerful and helped focus our minds on God's work around the world.

Another spiritual aspect of the Hagerstown site was the music. This year we had an orchestra with a violin, tuba, trumpet and timpani to assist the Festival choir and brethren in singing praises to God. On the Last Great Day, choir director John Barbusch called services to order with the blowing of an authentic shofar.



The sound crew and information table in Hagerstown, Maryland (photos by Erik Jones)

The powerful messages and music were the highlight of the Feast in Hagerstown, but there were also many physical activities that made the Feast even more enjoyable. Three bus trips were offered this year to tour Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Maryland, and to enjoy a musical about the life of Abraham and Sarah in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Family day activities included a picnic with lawn games and music at the Washington County Agricultural Education Center in Hagerstown. After the picnic, the brethren assembled in the auditorium for an entertaining Family Fun Show followed by a family dance.

The Hagerstown site was marked by unity, much selfless service, powerful messages, inspirational music and, most importantly, God's Holy Spirit.

Many thanks go to everyone who served to make Hagerstown a wonderful place to observe God's Feast of Tabernacles.

Erik Jones

Jekyll Island, Georgia

The Feast in Jekyll Island was truly a successful one this year. God heard the prayers of His people and gave us great weather and positive attitudes!

The first day of the Feast marked our hall being at capacity, as we had over 1,100 people in attendance. Additional chairs had to be set up and the brethren waited patiently as the ushers created new rows for the brethren. The offering was also taken, and the brethren gave lovingly of the financial blessings God had given them. As the Feast continued on, the attendance remained consistent throughout, with our highest figure at 1,196.

It was a peaceful Feast this year, and there were many positive comments referring to the smooth flow of services and various activities held throughout the week. Because we surpassed our registration figures, the ability to use the new supplemental hymnal to its fullest potential was severely challenged. Hymnals were placed on every other seat in the auditorium, yet because we had more than 100 additional people, it was challenging to get a new hymnal into everyone's hand.

The brethren participated in our annual community service project by purchasing items for two local charities: Amity House, a shelter for battered women, and Safe Harbor, a shelter for homeless children. This was a successful activity and the brethren gave generously to both community programs.

The family day was a huge success with more than 400 people in attendance as we spent a sparkling day at the beach. The brethren enjoyed an afternoon of watching dolphins, playing football on the sand and participating in tug of war events and a sand castle-building contest. A picnic lunch was served, and there was fun and fellowship for all.

The Festival video was a major success. The most inspiring part of the video for many was looking through the eyes of their brethren in Mexico. The emotion and sincerity of our brethren in this part of the world made an indelible mark on the audience, and showed the work of God moving forward in areas we in the United States sometimes take for granted. The mention of future videos capturing the spirit of God's people in other parts of the globe really excited the brethren.

More than 300 seniors attended lunch and participated in singing a variety of songs during the entertainment. David Mills acted as the emcee and did a masterful job in introducing the entertainers and keeping the show moving along at a good pace. Some said it was the best seniors' luncheon yet.

The Jekyll Convention Center again was most responsive and served our needs adequately. When we needed additional seating, they responded in a very efficient and timely manner. They also adequately supplied our hospitality rooms and rearranged the rooms for our Festival Youth Instruction, teen study and young adult activities. The conven-

tion staff told us that UCG is the easiest group to work with when it comes to planning and implementing weeklong activities.

Todd Carey

Kerrville, Texas

Over a thousand brethren kept the Feast in Kerrville this year. The new Feast site is situated in a beautiful hill country area, and it generated a tremendous amount of excitement and participation.

After an initial Texas downpour on the first Holy Day, we were blessed with clearing skies, gorgeous fall weather and pleasant sunny days for all the outdoor activities. We experienced a high degree of cooperation and attention to detail from the conference center staff. As well, all those who volunteered for parking did a tremendous job in light of the first rainy spell.

Kerrville lends itself to many outdoor and family activities. Everyone had plenty of opportunities to get together for organized events or spontaneous barbecues and jam sessions. Many of the brethren took advantage of the organized trip to San Antonio, the visit to the LBJ ranch and the wine tours to three area wineries.

The Festival choir, teen choir, children's choir, instrumental ensemble, talented performers and the new supplemental hymnal all contributed to making the Feast a great musical experience.

As Gary Petty remarked, going to the Feast every year is like being "taken to the mountaintop . . . to view what is ahead." The inspired messages truly presented a millennial view and gave us direction for preparing to reign with Christ. In addition to the sermons, Don Ward, Tom Damour and Roger Foster presented seminars and a Bible study that brethren could take advantage of before services or in the evenings.

A reporter from a local newspaper attended five services and wrote a very favorable, fair and balanced full article about the Feast. The paper also printed a second piece with photos and captions.

Members commented how quickly the Feast went this year, and what they hope to do next year in Kerrville!

Britton M. Taylor

Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii

The Feast in Lahaina, Maui, was truly spectacular, with warm weather, warm seas and a garden island atmosphere as the backdrop. Attendance reached 706, and we had to buy some extra chairs to accommodate everyone.

The Maui Theater provided the comforts and the acoustics of a state-of-the-art auditorium. The messages focused on the contrast between the problems of the world's values and violence, and the peaceful world tomorrow.

The seniors' luncheon at a nearby restaurant was attended by 90 and was very enjoyable. Other activities included a great luau, dinner cruises, a snorkeling cruise, a children's party at a miniature golf and bumper boat park, surfing by many and two dances. The singles had several activities as well.

The Church received press coverage as donations were turned in to a local charity called Light Bringers.

Mario Seiglie

Lexington, Kentucky

The Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day 2003 were conducted in Lexington, Kentucky. Lexington is nestled in the rolling hills of Kentucky's famous bluegrass country. The immaculately groomed horse farms encircle the city like an emerald necklace. Kentucky has a love affair with horses.

Two days of light showers were offset by six days of glorious blue skies, bright sunshine, light breezes



Signing special music in Lexington (photos by Janet Treadway)

and average temperatures in the low 70s. It couldn't have been any better for those of us visiting this beautiful city.

As is often the case when God's people gather in large numbers, our presence was noticed and appreciated by those who interacted with us. Diana Spina, sales manager at the Hyatt Regency, commented on how friendly, polite and smiling our members are. "They seem to be filled with joy," she said.

The inspiring sermons covered different aspects of the coming Millennium. The Feast video was well received. Many members commented how much they enjoyed the format of the video this year.

Activities were varied and well attended. There was something for everyone, from professionally guided tours of Shaker Village, Kentucky Horse Farms and a bourbon distillery, to family day with bowling, basketball, indoor rock climbing, batting cage and much more provided at an indoor recreation facility. We had 280 seniors attend the senior citizens' luncheon. Many felt it was one of the best they have attended, with good food and fellowship.

The Feast in Lexington ran smoothly because of the tremendous attitude of God's people and the willingness of so many to serve. All of our members there deserve a big "thank you."

Frank McCrady

Panama City Beach, Florida

The sugar-white sands and sparkling emerald green waters of Panama City Beach welcomed 1,813 brethren for the Feast of Tabernacles 2003.

The messages were inspiring and timely. Brethren commented positively on the meaty content of the spiritual meals served. There were many positive comments on the Feast video this year. The messages by the president and the chairman gave us a vision of our future in the Kingdom of God and addressed our personal involvement in that vision now.

All of the activities planned for the seniors, singles, teens and youth were very successful and well attended.

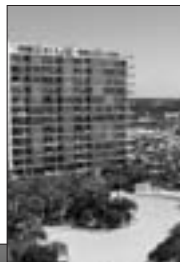
The Church was involved this year in a community service project donating various toiletry items to the Alfred Washburn Center for the homeless. Below are excerpts from a letter we

received from Sheilah Bowman, vice president, Marketing and Public Relations, of Sacred Heart Health System, as a result of our involvement.

"I am writing to tell you once again, how incredibly grateful we are to you and the United Church of God members for your overwhelming generosity to the homeless in our region.

"You exemplify the core values of our organization: service of the poor, reverence, integrity, wisdom, creativity and dedication. Words could not express the look on the faces of everyone when we arrived with a 14-foot Ryder truck filled with toiletry items you all donated!

"You and your church members are true 'Servant Leaders' and it has inspired others to do more. Everyone who donated items that day was eager



Panama City Beach, Florida (photos by Don Daugherty)

to participate, warm, friendly and ready to give from the bottom of their hearts.

"On behalf of the Alfred Washburn Center and the less fortunate of our region, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your generosity. God bless you."

The convention center staff continues to compliment the Church on the caliber of the brethren and the organization of our meetings and activities during the Feast.

Harold Rhodes

Steamboat Springs, Colorado

Our first year in Steamboat Springs was a real success. Virtually every comment was positive. The accommodations, along with an estimated two thirds of the brethren being able to stay in the same building as the meeting hall, were very well appreciated. The Steamboat Grand Resort Hotel is nearly a quarter mile long, so we got our exercise without leaving the building! Hotel staff and local businesspeople were among the

friendliest ever encountered at a Colorado site.

High attendance reached 658 on the first Holy Day, with a proportionately very high opening night attendance of 509. The Family Day at Elk River Guest Ranch was a very popular event, with over 340 present. A number of people rode horseback. Roping, wagon rides and fly-casting were popular. Dinner and Western entertainment with the Yampa Valley Boys capped off the evening.

The aspens were past peak when we arrived, but there were still some striking "deposits of gold" in the surrounding mountains. Next year should be near the peak!

The sermons and sermonettes were thoughtful and inspiring. Themes were truly centered on the meaning and significance of the Feast and Last Great Day.

Larry Neff

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

Three words summarize the Feast at Wisconsin Dells in 2003: unity, inspiration and joy. The theme of many messages seemed to center on keeping the vision of God's Kingdom alive. Many brethren commented on how meaty the messages were this year. Attendance held strong during the Feast with a high attendance of 1,183.

Three new activities were added this year. A train ride was enjoyed by 400 brethren one beautiful afternoon and separate teen and family day activities included sports, games and music in a large recreation facility.

Special music has always been a highlight of the Feast in Wisconsin Dells. Brethren were inspired by music from the Festival choir, the 32-member orchestra, a teen choir, a children's choir and a flute ensemble.

A nice sit-down luncheon meal was enjoyed by 249 seniors. At the family dance, brethren brought hundreds of pounds of nonperishable food and household items so they could be donated to a local food pantry. Numerous activities for singles were enjoyed along with a seminar, "Learning to Fear God." Festival Youth Instruction classes were attended by around 125 youth.

Brethren bought stuffed "millennial animals" and after services on youth day, preteens picked one animal as a special Feast gift from their extended Feast family. The remaining animals were donated



Festival Youth Instruction students in Wisconsin Dells (photo by Steve Nutzman)

ed to a hospital and local police and fire departments.

Many thanks to all the brethren who served at the Dells Feast site. We all thank God for blessing us with such an inspiring and encouraging Feast.

Steve Nutzman

Zambia

Nalubanda, Mumbwa

This year 127 happy brethren attended the Feast in Nalubanda, 153 kilometers (95 miles) west of Lusaka, in Zambia.

Brethren stayed in literal booths made from wooden poles and covered by grass. There was no running water. Electricity, generated from solar panels, was confined to the main hall. Cooking was done on open fires. Regardless, the atmosphere was electric and the joy infectious. We all ate together, thus providing opportunity for fellowship and service to each other.

André van Belkum, chairman of UCG-Southern Africa who visits the area twice a year, opened the Feast. He gave four sermons pointing brethren to the Kingdom. He left Monday for Harare, Zimbabwe, in order to spend time with the brethren there.

Another highlight was the abundance and variety of food, thanks to the \$500 donation from the Church and others. Other events included the passing on and handing over of the first heifers from the LifeNets project to the next generation of members. There was also an exciting event when Bridget Mafohla was baptized. Then there was the usual fun and laughter at the Family Day. The youth were not forgotten, as a dance was arranged.

There was a possibility that the season's first rains would mar the last day. Since these downpours can be severe, a public prayer was given, and God intervened to keep the rains away. It rained in the surrounding areas, but not at the Feast site.

Members were all in agreement that once again God had richly blessed them with plenty of spiritual and physical food.

Kambani Banda

Zimbabwe

Harare

Harare, the capital city, was the venue for the Feast of Tabernacles 2003 in Zimbabwe. In spite of a national economic crisis characterized by high inflation (440 percent), foreign currency and fuel shortages, brethren traveled from as far as the southern city of Bulawayo (440 kilometers or 270 miles) and the eastern city of Mutare (267 kilometers or 165 miles) to keep the Feast.

The average daily attendance was 12. We were able to enjoy a warm family atmosphere featuring inspiring sermons on video and uplifting live sermons by Pastor André van Belkum who spent three days with us.

On the physical side, we enjoyed lunches at a fine garden hotel, a barbecue, a picnic and game viewing at a nearby game park. Because of the severe economic and social conditions existing at the moment, there was a closeness and warmth prevalent among those of us there. It is interesting to see how spirits can be lifted when brethren encourage and support one another during times of trial and difficulty.

Mike Mukarati



From the Word

Alcoholism and You

Beginning with this article, the Focused Education Committee will be sharing helpful information on the critical and often neglected subject of alcoholism. This article explains the need for alcoholism information in the Church.

by Larry J. Walker

Alcohol contributes to 100,000 deaths annually, making it the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States. One half of all traffic fatalities and one third of all traffic injuries are related to the abuse of alcohol. The National Academy of Sciences estimates that alcoholism and alcohol abuse in the United States cost society from \$40 to \$60 billion annually.

Currently, nearly 14 million Americans—in every 13 adults—abuse alcohol or are alcoholic. About 43 percent of U.S. adults—76 million people—have been exposed to alcoholism in the family.

It is estimated that over 3 million teens between the ages of 14 and 17 in the United States today are problem drinkers. More than 60 percent of high school seniors report that they have been drunk; 31 percent say they have had five

or more drinks in a row during the last two weeks. (Source: www.alcoholaddiction.info/alcoholism-statistics.htm.)

Despite these shocking statistics, alcohol consumption has increased nearly 50 percent over the past generation. Each of the millions of alcoholics negatively affects an average of four to seven other people. There is no way to put a dollar figure on the emotional agony suffered by alcoholics, their families and coworkers.

Although these figures are for the United States, alcoholism is a prevalent problem in other nations as well.

Is alcoholism a problem in the United Church of God? A survey conducted some 20 years ago in our previous affiliation indicated that alcoholism afflicted the membership of the Church in similar proportions to the society in which they lived. We bring our problems into the Church, and society has far greater effect on us than many of us would like to admit.

The fundamental reason has already been stated—we have our roots in this present system and are not immune to the effects of this growing problem.

Many of you reading this article are impacted by alcoholism. Others know of friends, family members or other brethren who have problems when drinking. And this is only the tip of the iceberg, because denial is one of the primary symptoms of the affliction. In addition, by semi-controlled drinking,

many alcoholics evade detection for long periods of time.

The problem of alcoholism thrives in an atmosphere where knowledge and awareness are lacking. Many misconceptions, misunderstandings and prejudices about alcohol and alcoholism and how to deal with it perpetuate the problem and prolong the suffering of all concerned. An enlightened membership can be a strong bulwark against the painful experiences of alcoholism.

Here are some specific areas of need.

Prevention

The old adage, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” is certainly true with reference to alcoholism. How can we recognize the symptoms and signs of developing alcoholism? Driving under the influence, public drunkenness or debilitating physical problems are the later stages of this problem, not the onset. How can we help our children understand and prevent this destruction in their lives?

A wealth of material is available on the subject, much of it at no cost.

Recognition

How would you recognize a problem with alcohol? Few of us are experts in this field. Could you evaluate a developing situation in your life or another's? What exactly is alcoholism? Is it a character weakness or an illness? What are the symptoms? Where would

you find sound and reliable information?

Referral

If you or someone you know has a problem with alcohol, what should you do about it? Should you tell the pastor if the person is a member? Should a member seek help outside the Church, or should prayer and ministerial counsel be sufficient?

How much do you know about treatment programs? What happens at AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) or Alanon meetings? Should a Church member participate in these programs? What about the 12-step AA program? Is it really a spiritual program? If so, would such involvement with nonmembers be joining another religion?

Understanding and Support

Alcoholics and their families live under a heavy burden of guilt and shame. Even in recovery there can be a great deal of emotional pain and trauma for the entire family. God intends the Church to be a unique spiritual support system for suffering members (1 Corinthians 12:26).

Alcoholics and their families need love and support of the right kind. Unfortunately, the “way that seems right” is often the opposite of what is really needed. The more we understand the dynamics of any problem, the better we can identify with those who struggle with it. Alcoholism is no exception.

Reaching Out to Others

Jesus came “to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed” in the context of preaching the gospel (Luke 4:18). He was able to reach out to those suffering people and offer them help and hope.

Alcoholism involves a downward progression to the bottom of the barrel—medically, financially, emotionally and spiritually. It is 100 percent fatal if not arrested. Many never pull out of this syndrome. Those who seek help usually do so only after “hitting bottom” in some area of their life, or because of a successful “intervention” by caring, concerned friends or relatives.

With proper understanding, you can be a lifeline to someone and plant a seed of hope that can have positive results for all eternity (Romans 8:18-21).

Please do what you can to help by learning all you can about alcoholism so you can provide informed direction, support and encouragement for those in need as God grants you the opportunity. More information is to follow from the Focused Education Committee on this vital subject. **UN**

The Abuse and Addiction Committee: Carl Anderson, Dennis Luker (committee head), Richard Pinelli, Larry Walker and Glen White. This article was first published in the April 6, 1998, issue of New Beginnings.

Thanksgiving Daily

The Pilgrims and George Washington were on to a good thing. But why limit it to one day?

by Andy McClain

As we return to our homes after the Feast of Tabernacles, we oftentimes experience a letdown. We realize that we once again must return to our activities in Satan's world. This can be challenging after enjoying positive fellowship and interaction with God's people at the Feast. In the northern hemisphere, the winter months of December through February bring wet, cold and gray dreary days. Sometimes we face great trials and discouragement.

During the month of November as the days begin to turn colder, there is a wonderful day that is kept in the United States—Thanksgiving Day.

Thanksgiving is often called “Turkey Day” and associated with a family meal or watching football games, but it is much more than this.

The first Thanksgiving in New England took place in 1621 in the Plymouth Colony in what is now Massachusetts.

After arriving in November 1620, their first winter had been filled with hardship—little food except the game they hunted, only crude bark shelters to live in and much sickness. About half of the colonists died during the first winter. So after a good harvest the next year, the Pilgrims wanted to display their deep thankfulness to God for the help, guidance and progress the colony had been given. Being thankful and showing thankfulness illustrate a godly attitude that too often we neglect or forget.

What does it mean to be thankful? Why should we be thankful? What can we be thankful for? How should we show our thankfulness?

All of these questions are important for us to answer since the answers reflect a humble attitude we need to maintain as God's people.

What Does It Mean to Be Thankful?

Being thankful means that we have been impressed with a sense of kindness expressed towards us and want to acknowledge it. It means we are grateful. Thankfulness is the actual expression of our gratitude and acknowledgement of the kindness given us.



Thanksgiving Day has a long history and an important meaning for us

In 1789, the first president of the United States wrote a Thanksgiving Proclamation. In this proclamation, George Washington stated: “It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits . . . that we may all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection . . . for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have enjoyed . . . and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us . . . that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions.”

These wonderful words reflect a tremendous attitude of humbleness and gratitude that we would all do well to have in our lives.

Why Should We Be Thankful?

Read Psalm 8:3-6. David wonders why God is mindful of man. Remember that we are nothing more than dust (Genesis 2:7; 3:19), yet God has created us to have “dominion over the works of [His] hands.” We have a tremendous destiny of developing righteous character and potentially having eternal life in His Kingdom. This thought alone should help us be thankful each day.

What Should We Be Thankful For?

Once we recognize what our potential is, we should be thankful for being able to understand God's truth. Matthew 13:16-17 says, “But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see what you see, and did not see it; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

God opened our minds and guided us to repentance. So we should also be thankful that He has also removed “our transgressions from us” as far as “the east is from the west” as Psalm 103:11-12 states. To help us continue in His ways, God gives us “the Comforter” which is the Holy Spirit to help teach us.

There are also many promises that God gives to us for following His way. They include many physical and spiritual blessings. You can take the time in personal study to review some of your favorite promises, but for brevity consider James 1:17, which says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights.”

So How Should We Show Our Thankfulness?

“In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God,” Paul wrote in Philippians 4:6. Our prayers should reflect our gratitude towards God for what He has done in our lives and what He gives to us.

This should be a daily attitude as Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18: “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Our everyday words and thoughts should reflect a positive mindset of hope and joy in thankfulness towards God our Father for His great plan of salvation.

A Thanksgiving Day is celebrated annually in the United States and Canada, but as the called children of God, we should show our thanksgiving *daily* towards our Father by our obedience, trust and faith in Him. **UN**

Teamwork . . . That's God's Work!

■ The precision teamwork, concentration and cooperation of a championship crew can remind us of what we need to do to avoid Satan's distractions and be effective members of God's team.

by James D. Cannon

The breeze was calm out of the north-east. The wide river in upstate New York glistened in the morning sun. The gently sloping grassy banks were gradually filling with people among the scattered oaks and maples. Light laughter cracked the air as groups of spectators chatted together in anticipation of the day's events.

Precision Teamwork

Attention suddenly focused on a sleek needlelike vessel as its crew rowed with precision on a practice run up the river before the beginning of the annual regatta.

Actually, though, practice began many months before this particular day. Oarsmen began learning the art of precision teamwork through what seemed like countless hours of exercise and daily drills in the long rowing vessels called

were necessary were eventually eliminated until a final crew was chosen.

The final crew would then work out daily to develop precision speed and teamwork. Teamwork is essential for a championship crew, and the effectiveness of the crew is directly dependent upon the cooperation and the skill of each member. If one member lets down and gets distracted, the effectiveness of the entire crew will be reduced. Every-one counts!

The banks were now crowded with spectators as the 12 crews lined their shells up and cruised smoothly toward the starting line. The course was a straight run down river. All conditions were perfect for the day's race as the starter raised his arm. The staccato crack of the gun broke the anticipating silence of the crowd.

At once the powerful crews began to stroke together with precision toward the goal. The helmsmen shouted commands to increase or decrease the number of strokes per minute depending on conditions. Now all the long hours of drill were paying off for some as the shells began to separate and vie for the first position.

As the pack approached the final quarter mile, two shells pulled into the lead. They moved together, matching each other stroke for stroke. The oars moved with precision up, back, down, through the water and up again.



Wherever we live and whatever our circumstances, we are all a very necessary part of God's team. We are all a necessary part of doing His work. Just as the members of the rowing crew's total effort was necessary for them to become champions, we too must put forth our total effort daily to be God's championship team.

The cup and all the glory rightly went to them. Their hours of backbreaking drill had now paid off. They were the champions.

The crowd applauded them and the local newspapers printed the story of the race featuring their pictures and names. The other 11 crews were not mentioned in the same light because they had lost. Their chance at this year's trophy was behind. Their long hours of drilling and aching would not be rewarded this time. Maybe their turn would come next year or the next. That remained to be seen. Of course it would directly depend upon their pulling together as a team, never breaking the pace or getting distracted from their purpose and goal.

However, this year's winners put it all together well. They will be even harder to beat next year if they keep up the winning pace. But they are not unbeatable. They can let down. They can glory in winning and slack off. If they do, the chances are that the other crew who broke the pace this year will not break the pace next year. They may win next year's race and become the new champions. Only time and hard work will tell.

What Kind of Team Member Are You?

As members of God's team, we must all be pulling together daily now. Wherever we live and whatever our circumstances, we are all a very necessary part of God's team. We are all a necessary part of doing His work. Just as the members of the rowing crew's total effort was necessary for them to become champions, we too must put forth our total effort daily to be God's championship team.

What does pulling together mean for us?

We all must pull together in a unified manner on our knees, prayerfully and

obediently doing what we can, as we are able, to accomplish the purpose of our calling and fulfill the role God has given us within the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12).

The apostle Paul instructs us about this in Ephesians 4:16: "From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

We as team members must remember and understand that the chief sin of Israel in the past and in the present is the sin of idolatry.

Idolatry is allowing anything—our problems, our job, our family, our finances, our social life, our anything—to diminish or come between us and our relationship with God.

Distraction: A Wile of the Devil

Distraction is one of the wiles of the devil. Satan will use whatever it takes to distract us away from growing in our close personal relationship with God.

The apostle Paul again tells us in 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

And in 1 Peter 5:8-9 we are further instructed, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."

As team members, we must not allow

ourselves to be distracted from our purpose and responsibility of daily prayer and Bible study, meditation and fasting as often as is necessary for our spiritual growth so we can do our part in accomplishing God's purpose today.

There is only one sure way to guard against being distracted by Satan the devil so we do not miss a stroke and veer off course, and that is by realizing that we are defenseless by ourselves. We need to put on something that comes only from God.

Ephesians 6:10-13 tells us: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

As team members in the Church of God, our strength comes from our total reliance and dependence on our Chief Helmsman, Jesus Christ, the Captain of our Salvation (Hebrews 2:10). If we are not praying to God the Father, studying His Word, practicing and applying God's ways daily, we will become distracted and miss the mark. We will not reach the goal.

We must not become distracted by anything. We must not get out of cadence with God's purpose, God's work and our calling. Let's grow daily to be the championship team members God wants us to become as members of His family team. **UN**

James D. Cannon is a deacon in West Palm Beach, Florida.



Oarsmen began learning the art of precision teamwork through what seemed like countless hours of exercise and daily drills in the long rowing vessels called shells. The crews would row for hours until their backs and arms ached with pain from the strenuous drills.

shells. The crews would row for hours until their backs and arms ached with pain from the strenuous drills. Many of the crew hopefuls couldn't take the exhausting pace and gave up the goal of making one of the seats on the crew. Others who lacked the ability and the inexhaustible physical endurance that

They were neck and neck with one hundred yards to go, when one member of a leading crew got distracted and broke the pace. This caused his crew to falter and lose speed because of the broken cadence. The other shell then moved out in front and stroked its way to the finish line to win the race.

Treasure Digest

"Stay at Your Post"—An Answered Prayer

I have often heard, and sincerely believe, that service is an important part of the Feast. But several years ago I wanted to walk away from a service responsibility and never serve in that way again!

It's not that I didn't like the type of service I was asked to do that year. Actually, I enjoyed it. And, as usual, most of the people were easy to get along with. Most folks were friendly and cooperative—except for a few.

From the beginning until halfway through the Feast, these few made my job rough! They unintentionally made this the most difficult post I have ever held. The details are unimportant, but suffice it to say I was letting the situation get to me. I felt humiliated. In fact, I had already developed cold sores as a result of not coping with the stress.

I found the entire experience baffling and exhausting. Relationships matter to me. But it was obvious that this year's responsibility was going to test my mettle.

On the evening of the third or fourth day, in utter despair, I got on my knees and told God I was through. I had had enough! I was sick of the stress. I wanted to quit. I waited a bit, and then I asked God, "Do You want me to quit?"

Next morning, I arose after a restless night. I made a cup of strong coffee, got my Bible and went out on the patio. A cool breeze was blowing. Cotton-candy clouds graced the pink dawn.

I asked for God's inspiration on my morning Bible study, and then I opened to Ecclesiastes. I had read chapter 9 the previous morning. Now I started chapter 10.

After reading three verses, I was suddenly riveted to verse 4: "... do not leave your post!"

The words jumped off the page! They cut me to the quick, as my mother would say. And I read those words again.

The moment took my breath away. I was stunned! And I was in awe. For in that instant, I had my answer. I felt like God Himself was sitting there. He was talking one on one with me. He brought the exact answer I needed. And that moment changed my life!

Not only did I gain strength and encouragement, but the difficulty turned around. Things began to go much better, and my Feast responsibility was accomplished.

When we left a few days later, I was able to hug and forgive the people who I had felt were so difficult. These folks had no malicious intent; they were suffering with life troubles, and I was simply the closest object for their misplaced emotions.

But I won. I passed the test. And I would continue to serve—to stick with my post.

In my Bible, next to Ecclesiastes 10:4, I have written, "Never forget the Feast!"

I have never forgotten that answered prayer. I remind God of that from time to time. For now when I pray, I expect an answer. And I tell this story when appropriate. Because God gets the credit, not me.

God wants us to talk to Him. And He wants to talk to us. He will give you the answers you need, through the Bible and other means, if you will go

to Him in true faith. So stay at your post—wait for the answer—and never quit!

John A. Fox
Salt Lake City, Utah, congregation

Thankful for Trials That Didn't Come

We know when a much desired blessing doesn't arrive, such as a raise in pay or a promotion. We know when a trial appears, such as having to replace first the water heater and then the air conditioner.

What we tend to forget are the trials that don't come because God intervened. Most of us who have driven for quite a number of years can recall a goodly number of close calls such as the wreck that occurred in the lane right next to my car but "just happened" to miss mine or the numerous times I drove on lonely stretches of road when the car could have broken down but didn't.

Even many undesirable problems like needing to replace the hot water heater could have been worse had the plumber not tipped us off before it burst and caused water damage, or given us a \$350 discount.

With the air conditioner the trial was reduced by the company installing it that very day, a blessing in Houston on a typical 90/90 (temperature/humidity) summer day with a heat index of around 108 degrees.

When evaluating whether or not God has blessed me, I now try to factor in both the trial that didn't come and that which could have been worse. Then I can be truly thankful.

Marilyn Braley
Houston South, Texas, congregation

Are You a Barnabas?

If there is one thing we really need in this world, it is encouragement. People can be pretty tough on us, and we tend to be pretty tough on ourselves.

To be an encourager is to give courage to someone to continue on. Barnabas was such a man—that's why they called him Barnabas (Son of Encouragement)! What can we learn from him?

Barnabas was generous. Acts 4:36-37 records that he sold some land to be able to donate to the apostles for doing God's work. Surely this act of love was encouraging to the apostles.

Barnabas focused on the positive. When no one wanted Saul because of his past, Barnabas took him by the hand and encouraged others to accept and forgive him (Acts 9:27; 11:22-26). Barnabas also stood up for Mark when Saul (now called Paul) did not want to give him a second chance (Acts 15:36-39). Barnabas took Mark under his wing and worked with him. Mark went on to write the book of Mark and was later acknowledged by Paul as a help to him too (2 Timothy 4:11).

Barnabas was a supporter. He supported the apostles. He supported Paul. He supported Mark. He supported accepting gentiles into the faith. He followed the example of God—the greatest encourager.

Are we encouragers?

Do we support others? When we make an effort to support others in their projects, we are helping them reach their potential.

Do we refrain from being critical? It is easy to find mistakes in others, but if we're not careful, we could be the one who crushes their spirit and causes them to lose enthusiasm. If criticism is needed, then also determine to point out the good.

Do we seek to appreciate? Instead of being jealous, let's seek to appreciate the hard work of others, not taking each other for granted. Let's say thanks often and mean it.

Let's become a Barnabas, who was deeply loved by many because he knew how to love and encourage.

Janet Treadway
Cincinnati North, Ohio, congregation



Catch Them Being Good

Sometimes being a parent can be like being a broken record: "Don't do that!" "Be careful!" "I've told you three times to clean up your room!"

But sometimes catching our children being good can be much more effective. We must strive to notice any improvements or we'll be like the mother described by Alan Loy McGinnis in his book *Bringing Out the Best in People*:

"A little girl had been misbehaving and her mother had to rebuke her often. But one day the little girl had tried especially hard and hadn't done a single thing that called for a reprimand. That night, after the mother had tucked her in bed and started down the stairs, she heard her daughter sobbing. Turning back, she found her head buried in the pillow. Between sobs her daughter asked, 'Haven't I been a pretty good girl today?'"

"That question," said the mother, "went through me like a knife. I had been quick enough to correct her when she did wrong, but when she had tried to behave, I had not noticed it. I had put her to bed without one word of appreciation" (1985, pages 113-114).



Can't Buy Happiness

OK, so a big raise or a beautiful new car may not guarantee happiness, but they can make us a little happier, can't they?

Maybe, but not for long, says an extensive study. "Economist Richard Easterlin of the University of Southern California examined data from 1,500 people surveyed repeatedly over a 28-year period. He found that while healthy people are generally happier than unhealthy ones and married people are happier than unmarriages, increases in wealth and material possessions improve happiness only briefly" (Jeffrey Kluger, "No Price Tag on Happiness," *Time*, Sept. 8, 2003, page 99).

"When you get something new, the thrill quickly wears off, and even if it didn't, there's always someone out there who has something better," Mr. Kluger wrote explaining the findings.

More than 70 years ago, a blind and deaf woman grasped "The Simplest Way to Be Happy," though her wisdom obviously is drawn from a much older source. Helen Keller wrote: "A happy life consists not in the absence, but in the mastery of hardships . . . The simplest way to be happy is to do good. This is instant and infallible happiness. The surest proof that this is the law of cause and effect is, we may try every other conceivable way of being happy, and they will all fail. We cannot gather figs from thorns or grapes from thistles. The tree bears fruit after its kind both in the soil and in the soul" (*Home Magazine*, February 1933, www.afb.org).

Our Final Hour?

"The odds are no better than fifty-fifty that our present civilization on Earth will survive to the end of the present century."

So wrote Sir Martin Rees, the royal astronomer of the United Kingdom and "one of the true wise men of science," according to *U.S. News and World Report* (Sept. 1, 2003, page 118). He titled his book *Our Final Hour*, but thankfully another book shows that in spite of the grave dangers, a positive outcome is guaranteed:

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:21-22).

Be Ready to Give an Answer: Why Do You Teach a Second Resurrection (Chance)?

The Bible does not teach that anyone will have a second chance. Those who are called now to the knowledge of the truth and who have repented and received the Holy Spirit (those of the house of God, the Church) are now being judged (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-27; 1 Peter 4:17). Those elect (chosen by God) who endure and remain faithful (Matthew 24:13, 22; Revelation 17:14) are promised to be raised in the "first resurrection" (Revelation 20:4-6), a resurrection to immortality at Christ's return (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; 1 Corinthians 15:50-52). This is called a "better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:35).

But what about all those who died and never were called to salvation (John 6:44)? Billions through history have never heard the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12), much less made any commitment to Him. By saying there is a first resurrection, there must also be a second. "But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20:5). This resurrection is further described in verse 12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."

Judgment in the Bible is a process, not just a sentencing. These will have a first chance to really understand the books—the Bible—and a first chance to choose and faithfully follow God's way and to be written in the Book of Life. This is a resurrection to physical life, with an offer of the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 37:1-14) and a chance for repentance even for Sodom and Gomorrah and Nineveh (Matthew 11:20-24; 12:41-42). Truly God is not willing for any to perish, but that all should come to repentance and salvation (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4).

For More Information: *Fundamental Beliefs*, chapter "The Resurrections"; *What Happens After Death?; Heaven & Hell; God's Holy Day Plan*, chapter "The Last Great Day"; *The Resurrections* doctrinal paper (www.ucg.org/papers/).



Local Church Updates

Over 300 Attend Southern California's First Family Weekend

The weekend of Aug. 23 and 24 was a first for the Southern California congregations—the first Family Weekend with an attendance of over 300 for Sabbath services. The Garden Grove congregation was the host, with Los Angeles joining us as a congregation along with some from the Loma Linda and San Diego congregations.

The planning for this event began



Robin Webber gives a lecture; Garden Grove dance band debuts (Robert Bates, Roy Tower, Carol Wallaich, Nathan Brown, Aaron Bates and Terry Miller, not pictured, Craig Albright); young people examine lung sections of smokers and nonsmokers (photos by Jim Fraser and Jean Updegraff)

last November when Mario Seiglie, pastor of the Garden Grove congregation, mentioned that he would like Garden Grove to host a Family Weekend. He put together a team to organize it, led by him and his wife, Caty, Larry and Vicki Scher and Jean Updegraff, along with many other volunteers to handle all the different responsibilities. We were thankful to have the use of Santa Ana High School's wonderful facilities for Saturday's varied activities thanks to the generosity of Dan Salcedo, an elder in our congregation and principal of the high school.

The weekend began at 11 with two outstanding split sermons to kick off the theme of the weekend and begin it on a real high. Mr. Seiglie spoke on the parent relationship of God and Christ and David Register spoke on building great family relationships.

Following services, a variety of pizzas were delivered to add to the salads brought by our members. They amply fed our hungry group as our members chatted and fellowshiped on the grounds of the school facilities.

The afternoon provided another

type of food—an afternoon filled with a variety of hour-long seminars. The real dilemma was being able to choose only two.

There were 13 different topics designed to appeal to varied ages, interests and needs: "How to Develop Effective Communication in Marriage" (Robin Webber); "Men—Some Assembly Required" (Mario Seiglie); "Women—Well Assembled, Maintenance Required" (Dianne Clark); "Dangers of Smoking and Alcohol Abuse" (Jack Kemp and Bud Barnes—for ages 9 and up); "Baptism: the Watery Truth" (Jon Gar-nant—for teens and up); "Parenting Adult Children" (Larry Scher),



"Challenges of Being Single" (moderator Deborah Barr); "Meeting the Challenges of the Senior Years" (Roland Clark); "Living with a Non-Member Mate" (Carl Dailey and Brian Bell); "Music—Its Importance and Effects in Our Lives" (Dr. Wilfred Escobar—for teens and up); "Developing Healthy Emotions" (Larry Scher); "Excellence in Finance" (Allan Hambleton) and "Effects of Divorce on Men, Women and Children" (Vicki Scher).

We also had a rousing game of Bible baseball for youth ages 9 to 12 and activities for children ages 5 to 8.

After a relaxing dinner at home or in a nearby restaurant, 125 returned for a spirited dance filled with uplifting music, much of it from the 1950s, with enthusiastic dancers and watchers. This was the debut of our local, very talented, Garden Grove church dance band: Robert Bates, David Wallaich, Roy Tower, Craig Albright, Nathan Brown, Aaron Bates and Terry Miller (who filled in on drums that evening).

The next day about 125 came to a relaxing day at a beautiful park. Larry Scher was our chef for the day, and barbecued delicious marinated beef and lamb. Many activities were available and it was a wonderful opportunity to visit and fellowship.

The goals that were set for this Family Weekend in the initial planning sessions were exceeded as we received many enthusiastic comments on how successful and profitable this weekend turned out to be.

Jean Updegraff

ABC Conducts Mini-Sampler in Cambridge, Ohio

"Genesis: In the Beginnings" and "The Book of Acts: the Development of the Early Church" were the classes taught at an ABC mini-sampler held in Cambridge, Ohio, Sept. 6 and 7. The 74 brethren in attendance came from several congregations in Ohio, as well as other states as far away as Massachusetts.

Split sermons on the Sabbath of Sept. 6 preceded the mini-sampler. Matthew Fenchel, assistant to Church president Roy Holladay, and ABC instructor Ralph Levy, both from the home office in Cincinnati, gave messages on the Messiah and the Kingdom of God in the book of Acts, and the importance of avoiding false doctrine.

After a brief break for refreshments and fellowship, the classes started Sabbath afternoon, and continued

Saturday night after dinner. Mr. Fenchel and Dr. Levy taught four hours of classes on Saturday, and another eight hours on Sunday.

At the conclusion of the mini-sampler, all those who had completed the classes received a certificate of completion, and special recognition was given to the youngest participant, David Ekama, and to the two most senior, Naomi Noss and Tom Jackson.

Ralph Levy

Boston Area Hosts ABC Mini-Sampler

The congregations in New England hosted the second ABC mini-sampler of 2003 on Sept. 13 and 14. Auburn, Massachusetts, was chosen as the location as brethren came from Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont and Massachusetts to attend.

The event was prepared by the pastor, Paul Suckling, and he was ably assisted by elder Dan Dowd and a very compe-



Don Ward (upper right) and Gary Antion (right) present ABC mini-sampler in the Boston area

tent staff. They not only took care of the technical needs, but attended to snacks and lunches for Sunday's seven hours of presentation. Don Ward and his wife, Wanda, and Gary Antion and his wife,

Barbara, came to the area to bring the presentations.

After giving split sermons on the Sabbath, Dr. Ward and Mr. Antion gave three presentations that day. Seven more hours were presented on Sunday.

Dr. Ward presented information from the Fundamentals of Theology class on the "Nature of God" and "How to Study the Bible." Mr. Antion taught material from Comparative Religion on two doctrines of Catholicism—"Celibacy" and "the Virgin Mary." He also brought a PowerPoint presentation from the Practical Christianity class on "Building and Maintaining a Happy, Lasting Marriage."

There were 54 students who partook of the complete 10-hour program and received certificates. However, there were 134 for Sabbath services and 125 who stayed for the first three presentations. A total of 74 attended the seven hours on Sunday.

Don Lamoureux and his wife, Donna, traveled the greatest distance (160 miles); Eleanor Suckling Baird was the oldest attendee at 83 years young, and the youngest attendee (Rebecca O'Bern) was 15 years old. Joe Barocci was baptized the earliest (1962)! All received congratulations and ABC mugs filled with chocolates.

Excitement seemed to abound at being instructed in the Word of God and related topics. Several asked when we might come back again! Two large cards



of gratitude were presented along with pictures from the New England area. It is always delightful to see the enthusiasm God's people have for these mini-samplers. Taking ABC to the brethren has been a tremendous success!

Gary E. Antion

Columbus Church Picnic a Big Hit

If you like picnics, you would have had an enjoyable day on July 13 at Turnberry Park in the Columbus, Ohio, area. The weather was made to order, and the spirits of God's people were at an all-time high. Turnberry Park was ideal with its acres of grass, shade trees and the wonderfully air-conditioned pavilion. And what a joy with no flies or bees to bother us!



The Columbus, Ohio, picnic featured a water balloon toss and a new game—water balloon volleyball (photos by Amy Gunn)

There were games planned for the children of all ages—from 2 to 82. While several competed in horseshoes, a new game was introduced to the children—water balloon volleyball! They had a great time, and getting wet was part of the fun.

Everyone who was interested in being involved had wonderful opportunities to join in. Bubbles, great and small, floated through the air, and the tubs full of preloaded water balloons all found their targets.

The picnic food and drinks were spread out for all to enjoy on the counters in the pavilion, which was cleaned to perfection. In addition to the delicious potluck foods, several of the men grilled hot dogs and hamburgers—serving them piping hot.

After a feast of casseroles, salads and desserts, everyone got back to their activities, outside and in. All too soon cleanup was in order and we began to pack our cars for the trip home.

We left for home knowing that we had a great day and left the premises in great shape with everyone pitching in to help. We can't wait till next year!

Virginia Morgan

Garden Grove Seniors Honored

The senior members of the Garden Grove, California, congregation were honored at a luncheon on July 13 at the home of pastor Mario Seiglie and his

wife, Caty. Picnic tables were set up on the patio to take advantage of the warm summer afternoon and the parklike setting. A delicious meal was coordinated by Anna Moore and Caty Seigle, and served by young people from the congregation.

In honor of their many years of faithfulness and dedication to God's Church, each member over the age of 75 was presented with a beautiful plaque of appreciation by the congregation.

The luncheon was followed by an enthusiastic game of bingo, which



Seniors honored at luncheon. Back row, left to right: Mario Seigle (pastor), Bill Lear, Rose Norgren, Made Fredzess, Caty Seigle, Virginia Button, Verna Norton, Joe Young, Esther Bailey and Barbara McCormick. Front row: Elsie Rollo, Helen Lear, Dr. Van Lisman, Stan Norton, Vy Young and Helen Berg (photo by Jim Fraser)

included special prizes for the winners, and everyone was a winner!

The Garden Grove congregation has been blessed greatly through the years by having many outstanding examples of service to God's Church among its senior members.

Daniel Salcedo

Cincinnati East Raises Funds for International Feast Needs

The Cincinnati East, Ohio, congregation held yard sales Aug. 7-8 and Sept. 7 that raised over \$1,200 for Philippine Feast needs. With short notice, brethren rose to the occasion and donated a variety of items—from dishes and glassware to bedding and towels, from clothing and toys to furniture and books. One young person who helped at the sale commented, "This really is a yard sale that has something for everyone!"

The sales were so successful that Belinda McCloud, who organized them, is already thinking about a sale for next year. "There are always needs in the Church in the international areas," said Mrs. McCloud. "While we don't always have lots of extra money to donate to these causes, most of us have things that we no longer need or use in our homes. A yard sale can help turn those unused items into cash that can help our brethren."

The list of projects on the Good Works Program Web site (www.ucg.org/goodworks) will be helpful for individuals and congregations wanting to know of emergency needs of our brethren.

Becky Bennett

Pennsylvania Congregations Honor Pastor and His Wife

On Aug. 30, the Lewistown, Pennsylvania, congregation honored Mr. and Mrs. Dale Schurter with a special banquet in appreciation of their many years of service in the ministry. The congregation gave them a photo album of "ministry memories" and expressed their love, respect and appreciation to the Schurters.

The Bethlehem and Harrisburg congregations (also pastored by Mr. and Mrs. Schurter) had special events and gifts in honor of their years of service to the brethren.

We are thankful that the Schurters will be staying in the area in their retire-



Mona and Dale Schurter are honored with a cake on their retirement at a banquet in Lewistown, Pennsylvania, Aug. 30

ment so we can continue to enjoy their enthusiastic and loving spirit.

Rosalie Massie

Columbus Honors Its Senior Citizens

When the 30 senior citizens arrived at services on Sept. 13, they were each given a red rose corsage or boutonniere. After services, a "bring your best" buffet was served in their honor, featuring favorite dishes and delicious specialties prepared by the rest of the congregation.

Jerry Shallenberger hosted the delightful program that followed the meal. The children of the congregation had each interviewed one or two of the seniors prior to the evening. During the program, without giving the individual's name, the child who did the interviewing read the answers to the interview questions. The congregation then tried to guess who was being described. It was interesting to listen to the child read the details of the senior citizen's life and to see how quickly the person's name was guessed.

The last question that each senior was asked was, "What one piece of advice would you give to the youth of our congregation?" It was amazing to see how similar the answers were. The responses were almost unanimously one of two: "Stick with God's ways and



Columbus, Ohio, seniors enjoy children's presentation in their honor; seated at table from left: Norma and Ron Hosier, Jeanine Ruml, Virginia Morgan and Stella Baldwin (photo by Michelle Waterhouse)

the Church" or "obey your parents." The multitude of counselors brought priceless pieces of wisdom.

The senior citizens were each presented with a personalized gift during the course of the evening. This was a small token of thanks for the love, stability and wisdom they continually give to the congregation.

The coordinator of the activity, Alan Gunn, said, "The purpose of the activity was to honor our senior members and provide an opportunity for our youth to interact with them and get to know them better." It was a very successful, relationship-building activity for everyone.

Bev Galli

San Antonio's "Club 50" Grows

A special ceremony was held in honor of Will and Betty Johnson during a brief interlude in the announcements at Sabbath services Sept. 6 in San Antonio, Texas. The event was a mini-celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary.

The pastor, Gary Petty, asked them to come forward, and also introduced George Peyton as the president of "Club 50." Mr. Peyton presented the Johnsons with a rough-hewn, well-sanded 18-inch-long wooden club with their names and the pertinent dates written on it. He also read a poem he composed for the occasion based on his knowledge of their lives.

What is the significance of the wooden club? It was to let them know that they are the most recent members of "Club 50," made up of members of the



Members married more than 50 years in San Antonio, Texas—standing: Gail and Nell Nelson, Burk and Billie Sue McNair, George and Nancy Peyton, Goldie Fones, Betty Johnson, Nina Speer, Will Johnson, Donald Moore. Seated: Faye Stack, Mary and Bill Norrod, Ruthie Covelle, Louise Moore. Not pictured: Mel Clare (photo by Manuel Lomas)

congregation who have been married at least 50 years. At present there are 17 members.

The Johnsons were also presented with a beautiful, engraved anniversary clock, and after services everyone was invited to share a huge, beautifully decorated, delicious cake.

Fourth Softball Tournament Held

The Columbus, Ohio, congregation hosted their fourth annual invitational softball tournament at Hoff Woods Park on Sunday, Aug. 24. Among those accepting the invitation were teams from Akron, Cleveland, Dayton and Portsmouth, Ohio, as well as a team of Camp Heritage staffers. The six teams occupied three diamonds for most of the day, with the Portsmouth and Camp Heritage teams facing off in the championship game. In the end, the Portsmouth team walked away with the complimentary T-shirts awarded to the tournament winners.

Between games, both players and families shared food and fellowship, renewing and strengthening the bonds with their Church family.



Jim Orlemann of the Columbus, Ohio, softball team swings a ball in a game with the Camp Heritage team (photo by Amy Gunn)

The Columbus congregation looks forward to hosting the fifth annual tournament next year, scheduled for the Labor Day Weekend.

Jim and Marlene McCready

Philippine Members Receive Award

On Aug. 20, Remo & Associates, a sales agency managed by Church members Grace and Adolfo "Bong" Remo, received the Award for Marketing Excellence (AME). The AME is the most prestigious award given by Philam Plans, Inc. to its sales agencies. According to Roderick Lim, regional manager and host of the program, in the 14-year history of the company, less than 10 percent of over 400

sales agencies have qualified for the award. That Remo & Associates qualified for the award in its first year of operation—a feat that has been achieved by



Adolfo Remo (third from left) during award ceremony; Grace Remo (left) recounts their experience (photos by Philam Plans Corporate Communications Department)

only one other sales agency—made it doubly significant.

The dinner affair was attended by about 120 guests, which included the couple's family, friends, Church members and sales associates. Rey Evasco, pastor of UCG in Manila, gave the opening prayer. The company's top executives, including the president and CEO, Jesus G. Hofileña, were on hand.

Part of the program was a special audiovisual presentation entitled "In Pursuit of Excellence," which highlighted the phenomenal performance of the agency during its first year. Bong and Grace took the evening celebration as an opportunity to thank God for His blessings and to glorify Him for what He has allowed them to achieve.

Bong compared the agency to a fledgling eagle wanting to soar: "Why are eagles able to soar? Because God made them so. We could not have achieved so much success on our own. God is our partner and He has been very gracious to us. He has blessed us and prospered us even during economically challenging times. To Him we give honor and glory."

In her acceptance speech, Grace expressed their gratitude to God: "Above all, we give thanks to our Great God for all His blessings, for His guidance and direction, for everything that He has allowed us to achieve in our lives. To Him we give honor and glory."

Philam Plans, Inc. is part of the American International Group (AIG), a U.S.-based insurance organization. Bong and Grace attend the Manila congregation with their children Gracielle, Christine, David Jonathan and Angelica.

This article excerpted from the September-October United News Philippines, www.ucg.org/ph/unp.



Jane Suckling presents flowers to Ethel McMullen on behalf of the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, congregation. Mrs. McMullen turned 93 on Sept. 9 (photo by Walter Warren)

Announcements

Births

Juan Carlos and Loretto Arce from Santiago, Chile, are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Sara Belén. Sara was born on Feb. 18, 2003. She weighed 5 pounds 4 ounces and was 19 inches long.

The Arces are happy and thankful



Sara Belén Arce

to God because Sara came after 12 long and sad years of waiting for a baby.

Mike and Debbie Murdoch of Tonbridge, England, are happy to announce the birth of their second



Archie Lewis Murdoch

son. Archie Lewis Murdoch was born on Feb. 1, 2003, weighing 8 pounds 3 ounces and was 21 inches long. Big brother Conor is very pleased to have a new baby brother. Proud grandparents Eddie and Sandra Johnson also attend the Tonbridge congregation.

Mike and Julie (Jacobs) Helscher of Simi Valley, California, are very pleased to announce the birth of their



Peyton and Ethan Helscher

twins! Ethan Jacob Michael and Peyton Claire Laine were born nine weeks early on June 20, 2003, five minutes apart. Ethan weighed 3 pounds 14½ ounces and was 17 inches long, and Peyton weighed 3 pounds 6½ ounces and was 16½ inches long. Both are home and doing very well.

The delighted grandparents are Bill and Elaine Jacobs of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Larry and Linda Helscher of La Crescenta, California.

Andrew and Heather Gwin of the Williamsburg, Virginia, congregation



Colin and Evan Gwin

would like to announce the birth of their fraternal twins, Colin Andrew (5 pounds 3 ounces) and Evan McCager (4 pounds 15 ounces) on May 7, 2003. Paternal grandparents Ray and Gail Gwin also attend the Williamsburg congregation.

Kylie Racquel Pierce was born at home on Jan. 1, 2003, at 12:23 a.m. (first child born in Bell County,



Kylie Racquel Pierce

Texas!). She was 9 pounds and 21 inches long. Kylie joins sibling Levi (2).

Her parents are Scott and Susan Pierce of Troy, Texas. Grandparents on mother's side are Mark Schlitt and Joan Bynum. Grandparents on father's side are Lavon Pierce and Rhonda Marley.

Steve and Tina McGhee are proud to announce the birth of their second child, Victoria Lynn. She was born Aug. 10, weighing 7 pounds 12 ounces and measuring 21 inches long.

Sydney, age 2, is extremely excited that she has finally arrived. Her proud grandparents are Carole McGhee of the Louisville, Kentucky, congregation, Sam McGhee of Clearfield,



Victoria Lynn McGhee

Pennsylvania, and Kenny and Freda Bauman of Louisville.

William and Jacqueline Kyle of the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, congregation



Elizabeth Suzanne Kyle

are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, Elizabeth Suzanne. Elizabeth was born on Aug. 25, 2003. She weighed 8 pounds 2 ounces and was 21 inches long. Elizabeth is the third grandchild of both William and Patricia Kyle and Ronald and Wilma Mullen.

Engagements

Bill and Jenny Bradford of the Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, congregation are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Jenny Bradford, to Brad Huthnance, son of Trevor and Les Huthnance of the Melbourne East



Brad Huthnance and Jenny Bradford

congregation. An April wedding is planned.

Weddings

Mr. and Mrs. Robin Kireilis of Wilson, Wyoming, and Mr. and Mrs. Ken-

ny Wildt of Cincinnati, Ohio, are pleased to announce the marriage of their children, Sonja Camille Kireilis and Austin Scott Wildt. The wedding ceremony took place Aug. 10, 2003, on the property of the bride's parents in the beautiful, majestic Teton Valley and was officiated by Wilbur Berg. The couple will



Sonja and Austin Wildt

reside in Wilson and attend the Jackson Hole, Wyoming, congregation.

Bruce and Phyllis Gore of Birmingham, Alabama, are happy to announce the marriage of their daughter Lucinda (Cindy) to Daniel Allen Harper, son of Allen and Sandra Harper of Fairhope, Alabama. The wedding took place on Aug. 17, 2003, at the Donnelly House in Birmingham. The bride's father performed the ceremony.

The bride's attendants included Shari O'Malley, Amy Johnsey, Sarah Hicks, Rachel Summy, Kamie Treybig and Melissa Stevens. The groom's attendants included Allen Harper, Ben Harper, Jason Graning, Noel Mark Harvey, Jonathan Magee and Joshua Stevens.



Cindy and Daniel Harper

The couple now resides in Augusta, Georgia.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnnie Lambert of Elmira, New York, joyfully announce the marriage of their daughter Lori Denise to Ronald Reed Holloway Jr., also of Elmira.

David Baker performed the candlelit wedding on July 5, 2003, at Hamilton Hall, Elmira College.

Lori is a graduate of Ambassador University and Buffalo State College and is currently studying for a doctorate in chiropractic medicine at Texas Chiro-

practic College. Ron received a bachelor of science in biology from State University of New York at Cortland and a master's in biology from Elmira Col-



Lori and Ron Holloway

lege. He is teaching in the Santa Fe, Texas, school district while studying for a master's degree in education administration at the University of Houston, Clear Lake. They will temporarily live in the Houston area and attend the Houston South congregation.

Anniversaries

Bill and Helen Lear celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary Sept. 17, 2003. On the next Sabbath the Garden Grove, California, congregation honored them with a special tribute, card, cake and refreshments.

Bill and Helen have three children—Eloise Zemlicka of the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, congregation and sons Stephen and Jeffrey. They have five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

They were married in 1938 in Maryland. They heard about the truth in 1965 from one of Bill's coworkers, and they were baptized in 1970. After extensive travels in work situations, they came to Orange County, California, in 1988. Prior to retirement in 1999, Bill had been graphics services manager for an aero-



Helen and Bill Lear

space fastener manufacturer for the preceding six years.

Bill and Helen are both active in serving the brethren in the local congregation. Among their many talents, Bill is known for his personalized unique cards that he designs and prints on the computer, and Helen's flower arrangements for services are always a delight.



Melvin and Elsie Helmuth

Melvin and Elsie Helmuth celebrated their 50th anniversary Nov. 9, 2002, when the San Diego, California, congregation wished them a happy anniversary, serving cake and punch after services. (Mr. Helmuth serves as a deacon in the congregation.) The family then celebrated with a dinner at a local restaurant, and the following day a reception was held for family and friends in the clubhouse at the place where they live in San Marcos, California.

Mr. and Mrs. Helmuth have been blessed with four children—two daughters, Anna and Ruth, and two sons, Jon and Philip, as well as five grandchildren, Chris and Scott Dunlap, Janelle Dunlap and David and Ashley Faulkner.

Their wedding took place in Burr Oak, Michigan, on Nov. 9, 1952. They were blessed with the entire wedding party in attendance at the dinner and reception.

Will and Betty Johnson celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Sept. 4, 2003. The San Antonio, Texas, congregation honored them Sept. 6 (see article, page 21).

Will and Betty met at Prairie View A&M University. Betty received a B.A. degree in elementary education, and Will received a B.S. degree in industrial education and a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army at the same time. They made the military their career; Betty accompanied Will on all tours/assignments except Korea and Vietnam. Will retired in April 1974 as a lieutenant colonel after serving 20 years. They have three children and two grandchildren.

After retiring from the military, they both pursued careers as real estate counselors. Betty went on and received her broker's license, but after five years she became a full-time homemaker again.



Betty and Will Johnson

Will continued as an agent and retired July 4, 2000.

Will was baptized Dec. 7, 1980, by Greg Sargent, ordained a deacon Oct. 13, 1986, by Mr. Sargent and ordained a local church elder April 14, 1990 by Steve Moody and Dean Blackwell.

Betty was baptized April 16, 1978 by John Bald and ordained a deaconess Sept. 24, 1987, by Mr. Sargent.

Obituaries

Robert W. Harris Jr., 56, a member of the Jefferson, Georgia, congregation, died Thursday, July 24, 2003, of complications from many years of diabetes. Bob was born July 30, 1946, in Sparta, Illinois, and grew up in the St. Louis area. He served a year in Vietnam in 1968 during the Tet Offensive. Bob married on July 4, 1974, moved to Georgia in 1976 and was baptized in 1983. He and his wife, Diana, served in God's Church until ill health prevented him from attending the last few months.

Bob was an avid sportsman and athlete, playing semipro baseball as a young man. Shortly before his death, Bob remarked that he was looking forward to God's Kingdom and a new body that would no longer hurt, allowing him to



Robert W. Harris Jr.

be active once again. Bob's hearty laugh and sense of humor will be greatly missed.

Besides his wife, Diana, of 29 years, Bob is survived by his mom, Margaret Harris; sister, Ginny Morgan, and her husband, two children and two grandchildren all of the Belleville, Illinois, congregation; and sister, June Blonde, of the Tampa, Florida, congregation, and her husband and two children.

Don Waugaman, 73, who had been attending the Tonbridge, United Kingdom, congregation for the last few months, died while in England. Mr. Waugaman was planning to attend the Feast of Tabernacles in Grange-Over-Sands before returning home to America. Don's late wife was born in Folkestone, Kent, and he was enjoying revisiting places they had been to while she was alive. Isabella, Robert and Bruce Waugaman were all able to fly over from New York for the funeral service, conducted by Peter Hawkins on Sept. 9. Charles, Don's other son, was not able to attend.

Patty Jenkins, 51, a member of the

Raleigh, North Carolina, congregation, died Sept. 2, 2003, after having a brain aneurysm a few days before. She also had other health problems that appeared earlier this year, including a breast tumor and failing kidneys. Patty was a faithful member of the Church since her baptism in April 1971. She enjoyed her job teaching preschool children for 30 years. She



Patty Jenkins

also enjoyed singing in the local congregation and Festival choirs, entertaining brethren in her home, traveling to various Feast sites and sewing some of her own clothing.

She is survived by her husband, Reginald, also a member of the Raleigh congregation; her mother, Annie Cozart; and her aunt, Lucinda Richmond.

Patty's friendly smile and bubbly personality will be greatly missed by her husband and family and by the Raleigh congregation. It's comforting to know she is resting from her illness and that we'll see her again at the resurrection.

Donna Starr Pritchett, 51, of Birmingham, Alabama, died Aug. 28, 2003, after a lengthy battle with cancer.

She is survived by her father, R.C. Pritchett of Birmingham; her sister, Judy Danford, who lives in Castle Rock, Colorado, along with her husband, Bob Danford; her brother, Larry Pritchett, and his wife, Vicki, of Duncanville, Alabama; one niece, Laura Pritchett of Tuscaloosa, Alabama; and three nephews, Bret Pritchett of Tuscaloosa, Scott Danford and David Danford of Golden, Colorado.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Ernestine Pritchett, in 1982 and one nephew, Grant Pritchett, in 1987.

The funeral was Aug. 31 in Birmingham.

Charlie Fulton, 84, a longtime member of God's Church, died Aug. 9, 2003, after suffering from pancreatitis. Born Jan. 28, 1919, in Indianapolis, Indiana, Mr. Fulton was diagnosed with bronchitis at age 4 and suffered from lung problems throughout childhood. However, he was determined to serve in the military and joined the Army Air Corps in February 1941 and was a World War II veteran in the Pacific theater.

Charlie met his future wife, Ioline Woofert, in Kansas in 1945, and they were married Dec. 27 that year. They lived in Indiana until 1951 and then relocated to Arizona for Charlie's health.

The Fultons became aware of *The World Tomorrow* broadcast in the early 1970s and were baptized in 1972. In a time of trials for the Church in the late

'70s, Mr. Fulton became a member of the Church of God International and was ordained an elder in 1980. In spite of his frail health all his life, he pushed himself in service to others. In the past three years Mr. and Mrs. Fulton began attending with the United congregation in Tucson, Arizona, where they are remembered and recognized as fine examples of nearly 58 years of marriage.

Mr. Fulton is survived by his wife, "Ikey," his best friend. He will be remembered by many as a teacher, friend and servant.

Eileen Schofield, 80, a faithful member of God's Church for 44 years, died on Sept. 10, 2003.

Sometime in the 1950s Eileen began listening to Herbert W. Armstrong and was baptized in December of 1959.

Eileen was a registered nurse and used her skill and training in many different aspects of her life. She spent some time nursing in veteran's hospitals. In the 1960s Eileen helped deliver many babies of Church members who wanted home births, often handling the complete delivery by herself if the doctor was late to arrive. It was her desire to become a midwife one day.



Eileen Schofield

Later she went back to school to update her degree and earn certification as a public health nurse. She then went to work full-time as a school nurse in the Watsonville, California, area, overseeing all state public health requirements for a number of schools there. She also taught health-related classes in an extracurricular program.

Eileen loved music and had a beautiful alto voice. She performed regularly as a soloist in her congregation over the years, and also enjoyed singing with many choral groups. She was also able to play the piano, and encouraged her daughters to be involved with music. She was a dedicated member of the San Jose and Aptos, California, congregations for many years. Her last six years were in the Los Angeles, California, congregation.

She was always a very giving, caring person who spent many hours visiting and helping the sick. As young children, Sue and Sharon remember going with their mother as she would give foot massages and reflexology to those in need.

Eileen is survived by her husband, Thornton (Sko); daughter, Susan Crow, and son-in-law, Fred; daughter, Sharon Roybal, and son-in-law, Hector; granddaughters, Tamara Crow and Tracy Crow-Ogaz, and grandson-in-law,

Robert Ogaz; granddaughters, Katelyn and Caroline Roybal, and by her grandson, Jonathan Roybal.

Eileen's funeral service was conducted by Robin Webber, previous pastor of the Los Angeles congregation.

Greta (Brennecke) Gillam, 38, of Springfield, Missouri, died from injuries



Greta Gillam

from a car accident June 29, 2003. She is the daughter of Howard and Geraldine Brennecke, longtime members in the Cape Girardeau, Missouri, area. She is survived by her two children, Evan (10) and Haley (9), who are now living with their father, Mickey Gillam. She is also survived by one brother, Roger (and Stacy) Brennecke, and three sisters: Anita (and Kevin) Vanover, Rhonda (and Clint) Hornbuckle and Brenda (and Larry) Wilcox.

Her children received broken legs in the head-on collision, which was the result of a man crossing the center line at about 90 miles per hour. He also died in the crash.

Greta was attending Drury University, and was to graduate with honors this December.

The funeral was performed by David Johnson, pastor of the Cape Girardeau and Poplar Bluff, Missouri, and Paducah, Kentucky, congregations.

Linda Wood (Keeley), 53, died tragically May 15, 2003. At around 10:45 p.m. Linda crossed the street in front of her home to get the mail from her mailbox. On the way back to her house, she was struck and killed by a pickup truck. Linda had only lived in her new house for three weeks.

She leaves a daughter, Katryn Keeley and a son, Kirk Keeley. Linda attended



Linda Wood

the United Church of God in Kalamazoo, Michigan. We loved Linda and we will miss her dearly.

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

the identity of modern Israel, bothered by what he perceives to be a "white race only" prejudice. A subscriber argued that Israel and all American Indians descended from the Arabs. And another asked how the races passed through the Flood.

One enthusiastic subscriber completed the *Bible Study Course* and announced he is ready for another one.

Almost monthly, we receive a few requests from prisoners being released for information about halfway houses. Sadly, it's apparent that the American judicial system has no structured way to immerse longtime prisoners back into society upon their release. They are literally on their own. Two prisoners who are sincerely trying to live God's way of life behind bars wrote of their difficulty in obeying God in the raucous and violent environment they live in. The people God is calling in those circumstances surely need our regular prayers.

Several people asked for counsel on relationship problems, and a large number asked doctrinal and Bible questions.

Cecil Maranville

ABC Presents Mini-Samplers; Prepares for New Year

ABC instructors will be presenting mini-samplers in Jefferson City, Missouri, and Tacoma, Washington, over the weekend of Nov. 15 and 16. Melvin Rhodes and Ralph Levy will be teaching in Jefferson City, and Roy Holladay and Gary Antion will be in Tacoma.

Acceptances for the 2004 school year are nicely balanced with 14 males and 16 females. This class looks like it will be a very good one, and we are excited for them to come. There is still time for any who are still interested in applying to send an application for 2004. The deadline is mid-December.

Also we have recently been able to purchase a substantial number of books



What's New on the Web?

On www.ucg.org

■ Good Works Program

First project posted: Special needs for the Philippines. More to be added soon.

www.ucg.org/goodworks/

■ 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:

"Has America Lost Its 'Moral Mind'?"
"What's Your Bias?"

www.ucg.org/commentary/

■ Current World News & Trends

Browse up-to-date world news events by subject categories!

www.ucg.org/worldnews/

■ E-mail Updates and UCG eNews

Receive E-mail updates relevant to UCG members and weekly HTML newsletters with ucg.org updates. Sign up today!

www.ucg.org/contact/updates.htm

On vcmagazine.org

■ The October/November *Virtual Christian Magazine* includes "Father, Please Heal My Broken Heart," "Adrift No More," "A Halloween Story," "Hearts of Unseen Valor and Misjudged Intentions," "A Flick of the Switch Away From the Dark Ages" and more.

vcmagazine.org

On verticalthought.org

■ The fall inaugural issue of *Vertical Thought* has articles on "The Greatest Humanitarian Cause," "What Will 2013 Be Like?"; serving in Thailand and at camp, Darwinism, hell, secrets, Q&As and more. The Web site includes additional material not in the printed magazine.

verticalthought.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

■ **Anchor:** A message of hope for those struggling with homosexuality.
www.anchorhelp.com

■ **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

from the Dean Blackwell collection. Some were also donated by the family. Within this collection are some very valuable church history volumes and Sabbatarian material. This purchase will add greatly to the small ABC library here at the home office.

Gary Antion

Thornton Wins Emmy

Clay Thornton, now video editor for United, won an Emmy for his previous

work at the CBS affiliate station in Los Angeles, California. At the 55th Annual Los Angeles Area Emmy Awards Sept. 6 he was awarded an Emmy in the News Editor category. Mr. Thornton had previously won an Emmy in 1998 as part of a team effort for a multipart Light News Story, but this was his first individual Emmy.



Clay Thornton has won two Emmys (photo by Peter Eddington)

Delta Flyers: Help the Church Earn Free Tickets

Did you fly Delta Air Lines for the Feast? If so you can help the Church earn free tickets and not affect your personal frequent flyer miles. The process is simple. Locate your ticket number. It will begin with 006 and then a string of 10 or 11 other numerals. Send that number to USFestival@ucg.org.

This is a way of saving the Church hundreds of dollars. You still earn your personal frequent flyer miles too.

Charles Melear

Retirement Task Force Submits Report

Just before the Feast of Tabernacles, the Retirement Task Force (RTF) submitted its final report to President Roy Holladay. Commissioned in December 2002, the RTF worked for nine months on recommendations to address the many issues of ministerial retirement. Specifically, the RTF was asked to present input about meeting the financial and insurance needs of retirees, and how the transition of employees into retirement could take place. This issue is an important one for the Church, as numerous ministers will be reaching the Social Security age for retirement during the next 10 years.

Members of the task force included Britton Taylor (pastor and chairman of the RTF), Chris Anderson (risk, insurance and benefits manager for United), Larry Darden (general counsel for United), Aaron Dean (member of the Council of Elders), Bob Fahey (pastor),

Matthew Fenchel (assistant to the president), Rex Sexton (pastor) and Ken Treybig (pastor). The report is 70 pages long and includes many charts and graphs. It will be reviewed by the president and administration, and then presented to the Council.

Canadian Mail Increases

As of Oct. 22, the Canadian office had received about 10 percent more mail than it did in all of 2002—over 8,600 pieces. That's a new record.

Included in the total amount of mail received are about 1,300 Internet requests for literature and subscriptions.

The amount of mail sent out also continues to climb. The average sent out per month in 2003 is 11,926. Last year the average was 10,082 pieces per month.

The Canadian portion of the November-December *Good News* print run was 15,930 magazines.

Edwin van Pelt

Winter Camp Application Deadline Extended

Do you want to experience the fantastic personal growth, friendship and fun of a United Youth Camp during winter break? The ninth annual Winter Camp will be held from Sunday morning, Dec. 21 to Thursday morning, Dec. 25. (Staff orientation begins late afternoon on Dec. 20.) Campers will learn about God's way of life in a positive and enjoyable environment. This year's activities could include basketball, Christian Living Q&A, cross-country skiing, dance class, floor hockey, team challenge, tobogganing and more. The campers will have a brand-new dormitory for housing.

The camp application deadline has been extended to Dec. 1. Youth ages 12 to 18 are welcome as campers. Camper tuition is \$175

and high school staff is \$90. Free transportation will be provided from the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, airport on Dec. 20, after 6 p.m. and before midnight. Return to the airport will be Dec. 25, arriving at noon. Please plan arrivals and departures accordingly. There is an extra charge for room and meals for early arrivals. Please contact Steve Nutzman for any transportation needs at (608) 758-9228 or E-mail at steve_nutzman@ucg.org.

Campers can download applications at www.ucg.org/youthcamps. Camper applications are also found in the United Youth Camps 2003 magazine. For the latest Winter Camp news, go to www.wintercamp.org.

Steve Nutzman, Winter Camp director



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