



News At a Glance

332 Baptized Around the World

In 2008, at least 332 new members were baptized around the world. This compares to 293 reported in the January issue last year. Here are the baptisms reported at press time:

Argentina.....	8
Australia.....	17
Canada.....	15
Chile.....	16
Congo.....	1
El Salvador.....	3
Ghana.....	14
Guatemala.....	7
India.....	2
Ireland.....	1
Italy.....	1
Jamaica.....	2
Kenya.....	20
Malawi.....	1
Malaysia.....	2
Mexico.....	9
New Zealand.....	5
Nigeria.....	4
Norway.....	1
Peru.....	1
Philippines.....	27
Singapore.....	1
Sri Lanka.....	2
St. Lucia.....	1
Togo.....	1
South Africa.....	4
United Kingdom.....	8
United States.....	149
Zambia.....	5
Zimbabwe.....	4

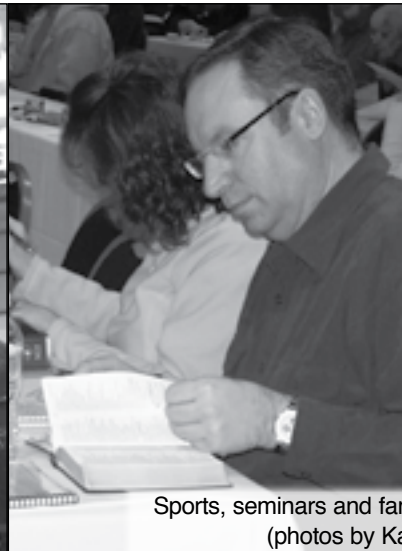
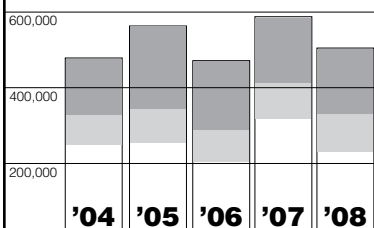
UCG Web Sites Pass 1 Million Mark

December 2008 marked the end of the second quarter of our fiscal year. In that quarter, 1 million first-time and/or unique visitors visited UCG's

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United Statistics

■ Internet Responses
■ Total Mail (non-cards)
□ Subscription & Lit Cards



Sports, seminars and family fun at the Winter Family Weekend (photos by Karen Deaton and Michelle de Campos)

WFW Draws Crowd in New Location

by Jeremy Lallier

New location? Check.
New theme? Check.
Same great Winter Family Weekend? Double check.

Families from all across (and even outside) the United States gathered in Louisville, Kentucky, at the newly renovated Galt House, eagerly anticipating four and a half days of sports, seminars, workshops and other fun activities for participants of all ages.

Festivities began the night of Dec. 23 with the kickoff of a three-hour family dance.

Veterans of the Winter Family Weekend may have originally been wary of the changeover to a new hotel (prompted by fire damage to the

Clarion, the hotel used for the previous four years), but even the most serious reservations were assuaged upon arrival. One guest fondly recounted walking down "glamorously decorated hallways of the elegant, riverfront Galt House Hotel."

Those participating in the volleyball and basketball games woke up—per Winter Family Weekend tradition—bright and early the next morning to compete at the two main sports complexes, Mid-America Sports Center and Hoops. Speedway and flag football were also hosted, as well as cards, board games and rock climbing.

In addition to the sports and games available, there were myriad workshops and seminars for those interested. Darris McNeely and

Melvin Rhodes presented four 50-minute *World News and Prophecy* seminars, while Gary Antion, Richard Thompson and Clyde Kilough delivered 18 ABC Continuing Education classes, which covered God's calling and generational differences, attributes of Christ as revealed in the four Gospels, the book of 1 John and interpersonal relationships.

Other activities included the Interpreter's Workshop, which offered lessons in American Sign Language, and the Writing Workshop, available to preselected applicants as part of an outreach program to identify and train potential writers.

See "WFW," page 7

Leadership Workshops Conducted in Guatemala

by Leon Walker

On Sabbath, Jan. 10, the Ministerial Development team began a three-day leadership workshop in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

On Jan. 8 Clyde Kilough, president of the United Church of God, Richard Pinelli, director of Ministerial Development, and Lyle Welty, pastor of the Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregations arrived in Guatemala. They were met by Leon Walker, the regional director for the Spanish-speaking areas and Luis Mundo, pastor of the congregations in Guatemala.

All ministers and wives from Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico were invited to attend the leadership workshops. Also in attendance were the deacons and wives from Guatemala and El Salvador and the deaconess, Lilian Pérez, from Guatemala.

The Spanish-speaking region has long recognized the need for ministerial and leadership development. As is the case in other areas, our ministry is



Jorge Polanco, Luis Castillo, Lyle Welty and Mario Higueros at the Leadership Workshop (photos by Clyde Kilough)

aging and preparation for the future is essential. When the Ministerial Development Program was initiated, I invited Mr. Pinelli and his team to come to Chile, which they did in June 2007. The program in Guatemala marks the second leadership workshop in Latin America for these important meetings.

Attendance for the conference was

not limited to the above-mentioned Church leadership. All members throughout Guatemala who wished to attend were invited to do so. Preparations for the conference began several months ago, and members traveled to the capital from all parts of Guatemala.

See "Guatemala," page 6

Pastoral Training Sessions Begin at Home Office

by Richard Pinelli

The third set of pastoral training classes took place Jan. 20 to 28 at the home office. The nine-day session was filled with 68 hours of classes, covering the foundational principles of how to pastor local congregations.

Eight pastors with 18 to 30 years of experience as well as two brand-new trainees sat in seminars conducted by Jim Franks, Clyde Kilough, Richard Pinelli, Richard Thompson, David Register, David Johnson, Darris McNeely and Greg Sargent.

These classes created the foundational principles upon which we will build the next two sessions. We looked at our beliefs, our foundational character needs, our organizational needs and our governmental structure.

"I want to continue to become a more effective servant in working with God's people and provide opportunities to work with future leaders," commented Todd Carey, pastor of the Williamsburg, Virginia, congregation. "These training sessions help me to get to the nuts and bolts of the day-to-day job of a minister."

In addition to Mr. Carey, participants in this installment of pastoral training are Ken Graham, Steve Myers, Rex Sexton, Gary Smith, Dave Baker, James Capo and Eduardo Hernandez. Our two new hires are Fred Nance and Ed Dowd.

In the second session in March, the pastors' wives will join them in attendance, as will several new international pastors.

All three sessions will cover approximately 90 topics given in about 210 intensive training hours. **UN**

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News At a Glance

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six proclamation Web sites (ucg.org, gnmagazine.org, beyondtoday.tv, verticalthought.org, wnponline.org and thisistheway.org).

In comparison, 700,000 people accessed the Web sites in the previous quarter. It is also an increase of 300,000 visitors from the same quarter last year. We will continue to monitor traffic to our Web sites as we continue to increase and improve our content pages.

Aaron Booth

Portland Winter Weekend Rescheduled

Due to severe weather in the Northwest, the Portland Winter Family Weekend activities and seminars had to be cancelled in December. They have been rescheduled for Presidents' Day weekend, Feb. 14 to 16.

New Camp Carter Director Announced

The United Youth Camps team is pleased to announce the appointment of a new teen camp director for Camp Carter in Texas: Andy Burnett. He will replace Ken Treybig who will assume responsibilities for the overall coordination of the United Youth Camps program.

Mr. Burnett pastors congregations in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Laurel, Mississippi. He also has previous experience as a camp director of the Northwest teen camp, Camp Davidson.

Dave Register

Revised Date for Camp in Zambia

The youth camp in Zambia has been rescheduled for April 21 to 29, 2009. Our camp will be held in Lusaka at our new property. The United Youth Corps program in Zambia is still scheduled for June.

Kambani Banda

Preteen Camp Dates Announced

The United Church of God has a very active and invigorating preteen camp program.

Preteen camps serve our children ages 6 through 12 and generally last four days and three nights. In 2008 we had eight preteen camps across the United States

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Profile: Janice Creed

Coming from a family of longtime members of the Body of Christ, Janice Creed feels privileged to have had her paternal grandmother, great-aunt and both of her parents baptized and given the knowledge and understanding of God's plan. Her father, James Jenkins, whom she describes as "a faithful servant," served in the ministry for over 40 years until he died in 2004. Her 80-year-old mother, June, remains a faithful member, attending the congregation in Laurel, Mississippi. All her sisters, their husbands and their children also remain faithful to God.

Janice commented, "Like many, we have experienced many trials and challenges in our journey as Christians. The promise God gives that all things work together for good to those who love Him has always given me great comfort. My father taught me to thank God for the trials we face. He said that it is through the fiery trials

we experience that, in the end, God is able to see His image reflected in the silver vessel. I look forward to seeing my father, grandmother, great-aunt and all the saints who have preceded us in the resurrection."

Her 3-year-old granddaughter marks the fifth generation in her family that has been given the knowledge of God and His grace. "How pleasant it is to see evidence that God works with families and generations," she remarked. Baptized just before Passover in 1969, Janice will have been a member of God's Church for 40 years this spring.

Janice's passion is education. In addition to graduating from Ambassador College in 1972 as an education major, she went on to receive her master's degree in education administration and leadership in 2000. She is currently a doctoral candidate in leadership.

While finishing her doctoral studies in 2005, Janice wrote a business plan,

procured financing and purchased a Montessori preschool in Big Lake, Minnesota, where she works as its director. She also teaches a Montessori class there in the morning and kindergarten in the afternoon. The school serves approximately 60 students between the ages of 3 and 6 with a staff of nine.

Besides her Montessori certification, she holds a Minnesota K-6 teaching license and a K-12 administrative/principal license.

Two years ago, she was asked to serve on the leadership team of the Big Lake Business Retention and Expansion Program. The commencement of this vital community program was celebrated in October of 2008.

Because of her extensive background in the field of education and leadership coupled with her desire to serve, Janice has become a great servant to the Church. While attending



Janice Creed

the Little Rock, Arkansas, congregation, Janice was part of the original Sabbath school pilot program, which later produced the YES program.

More recently, she served on the committee that designed the current Sabbath school curriculum, writing and editing a number of lessons in level 1.

She continues to teach Sabbath school in the Minneapolis, Minnesota, congregation where she and her husband, Dan, now attend. **UN**

FORWARD! Growing Spiritually Proactive and Reactive

by Clyde Kilough



It is stated that even as a 12-year-old, He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). Jesus was a living definition of what it means to be "forward" in growth.

But unlike the rest of us, none of His growth came through overcoming personal sins. No, His spiritual maturity originated from other sources, and in His example we, too, find important and positive ways to move forward.

It's simply this: growth is stimulated from two angles, proactive and reactive. Proactive has to do with actions we initiate; reactive has to do with actions initiated by other people, events or situations.

Jesus grew by both. For example, Luke points out that He was "in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions" (v. 46). He proactively chose to put Himself in that environment.

It's similar to Josiah's proactive approach as a young king: "He began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge" the idols (II Chronicles 34:3).

Jesus took other proactive steps such as withdrawing from everyone to have special time for prayer and retreating to the wilderness to fast.

On the other hand, He also grew from having to react to many circumstances that were very difficult and often brought on by other people. "For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls" (Hebrews 12:3). He understands that not all suffering is self-inflicted but can be the result of the mistakes, wrong attitudes and sins of other people. Yet He always learned and grew by properly reacting to suffering caused by others (Hebrews 5:8).

Paul found himself in many unfair, difficult circumstances not of his own making. But out of these came some of his greatest growth. "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can

do all things," he concluded, "through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:11-13).

We share similar reactive growth opportunities as well. They come in both positive and negative situations, such as:

- Trials or blessings.
 - Failures or successes.
 - Opportunities.
 - Changes in life (e.g., marriage, having children, getting fired or transferred, etc.).
 - Tough decisions.
- Sometimes, though, such conditions require that we become proactive in other ways, such as:
- Making extra time for study, prayer and fasting.
 - Studying good examples.
 - Seeking wise counsel.
 - Serving.
 - Meditating and planning.
 - Focusing first on the Kingdom of God.

In all of these circumstances, we can grow. Life is full of opportunities for us to move forward spiritually. Always be looking, like Christ, for both the proactive and reactive ways to grow in favor with God and men. **UN**

Clyde Kilough is president of UCGIA.

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News From Around the World

Imprisoned Member Still Hopeful in Philippines



Jed Sy (photo by Daniel Macaraeg)

by Daniel Roy G. Macaraeg

On Oct. 7, 2008, the Regional Trial Court (Branch 9) sentenced Jed Pilapil Sy and her brother Jessie Jones “Jong” Pilapil to life imprisonment for the crime of manufacturing dangerous drugs and delivering drug apparatus and other paraphernalia. The court also fined them 500,000 pesos (US\$10,559) each for the manufacture and delivery of apparatus and another 5 million pesos (US\$105,593) each for the manufacture of drugs.

Jed Pilapil Sy is a member of the United Church of God living in Davao City. She was baptized on Oct. 1, 1999, by her pastor, Edmond D. Macaraeg. Her widowed mother, Jessica Yu Pilapil, is also a member living in Tago, Surigao del Sur, and has been suffering from scleroderma since 1992. Jed married nonmember Allan Sy in 2000. They have one daughter, Allen Jade (“Tin-Tin”) Sy, who just turned 7 years old last December.

Jed and Jong, assisted by their legal counsel, pleaded not guilty during their arraignment. In the *Sun Star Davao* the day after the verdict, Oct. 8, reporter Rhodamae Hernandez stated: “The

core of the defense is one of a denial, and while the court observes that *there is indeed no direct evidence* linking Jed Sy and Jong Pilapil to the manufacture of dangerous drugs at the Dumoy warehouse, the two accused failed to rebut it” (emphasis added). By the court’s own admission, there is indeed no direct evidence linking Jed and Jong to the crime of which they have been convicted.

After the court session adjourned, Jed’s lawyer, Levito Baligod, declared before the media that the judge’s decision was “very unfair.” Within a week or so, he filed a motion for reconsideration and petitioned the court to inhibit the presiding judge, Romeo Albarracin.

According to Mr. Baligod, “The judge was swayed by fear of public criticism or public opinion.” He noted that during the promulgation, the courtroom was unusually filled with media people, which is indicative of how highly publicized the case has become. On Oct. 23, he granted the motion to inhibit himself in order to “give all parties peace of mind” and to “obliterate any perception of partiality or bias.”

Additionally, Mr. Baligod filed a petition for a change of venue away from Davao City, where the media and political environment would be more conducive to a fair trial. At this time, the Philippine Supreme Court is still deciding on that petition. The hope is that once this case goes out of Davao City, the environment will be much more neutral and objective.

As always, we seek God’s will in all these matters. God knows what’s best, and everything still happens for a pur-

pose. Our hearts and prayers go out to Jed and her family at this very difficult time.

Background

On the night of Dec. 31, 2004, PDEA (Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency) operatives raided a shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) factory in Dumoy, Davao City. That property—secretly converted by the new tenant, a Korean national, into a drug laboratory—was registered in Jed’s name. Jed was then invited for questioning on Jan. 4, 2005, but she was put in jail that same day.

Jong voluntarily turned himself in when he learned that he was also wanted. Jed’s husband, Chinese national Shi Jin Sheng (alias Allan Sy), remains at large. Jed was later transferred to the city jail on Jan. 28, 2005.

God has given Jed favor with the prison warden. She is her right-hand woman in all the affairs regarding the prison, does its bookkeeping and accounting, and also runs their cooperative. Jed is often the one assigned to chair, emcee or organize in-house programs in the jail like livelihood workshops and spiritual development lectures/studies, etc.

As Jed enters her fifth year in prison, she is grateful and thankful to God for the peace that she has. She is also encouraged by the brethren who have prayed for her and have written words of comfort and inspiration.

To learn more about Jed’s experience, read her article “Reflections From Behind Bars” on page 12. **UN**

Daniel Roy G. Macaraeg is the managing editor of United News Asia.

Minister Visits Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic

Ralph Levy, a minister who works in the home office in Cincinnati, Ohio, visited two Spanish-speaking Caribbean islands the week of Dec. 29, 2008. The purpose of the visit was to have contact with both members and prospective members.

Dr. Levy’s first stop was in San Juan, Puerto Rico. On Wednesday, Dec. 31, he visited with Eloy Valdes and Gladys Nieves de Valdes, two members who live in Aguada, in the northwestern

part of the island. Mr. and Mrs. Valdes are both bilingual (as are many people in Puerto Rico), and have been faithful members of the Church since the 1980s. Gladys is a newspaper reporter, and Eloy is a property manager. The three enjoyed Christian fellowship over lunch at a restaurant in the Condado district of San Juan.

On the morning of Thursday, Jan. 1, 2009, Dr. Levy flew from Puerto Rico to Santo Domingo, Dominican

Republic. The flight lasts about one hour, as the two islands are close, both geographically and culturally.

On Friday, Jan. 2, Dr. Levy conducted a wedding ceremony for Wilson Jimenez Rodriguez and Katiuska Loreley Gabriel Then, a couple who had married in a Dominican civil marriage in September, but wished to have a Church of God ceremony. Katiuska is the sister-in-law of Zoraya Diaz de Gabriel, a member in Santo Domingo. The wedding was attended by some 40 family and friends, who enjoyed a delicious dinner together.

In the Dominican Republic there are several who are indicating an interest in the United Church of God and its teachings. About eight were present at the Bible study held in the home of Orlando Gabriel and his wife Zoraya on the afternoon of Jan. 3. Dr. Levy spoke on justification and living faith, emphasizing the need for Christians to produce and not just profess. Following the Bible study there was a question-and-answer session.

Plans call for continued visits to the Dominican Republic, to serve members and interested parties. **UN**



Ralph Levy (center) with Gladys and Eloy Valdes

International News At a Glance

UCG Germany Hosts First Winter Family Weekend

Fifty-six UCG-Germany members and visitors met on the evening of Dec. 24, for a four-day activity in a youth hostel near Hachenburg, about 60 miles west of Frankfurt.

The activity is the first of its kind for UCG-Germany. Members have expressed a desire for years to have some kind of overnight activity to get away from Christmas celebrations. This holiday is a major family festival in Germany, so for some families and especially for singles, it can be a challenging time.

Members from Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom were in attendance for the activity. We enjoyed daily Bible studies, bowling, swimming, sight-seeing and “lots of bonding,” as Jesmina Allaoua put it.

Interesting to note, two families participated in the weekend that previously had no affiliation with the United Church of God, but had kept the Sabbath on their own. While searching for Christians who do not keep Christmas, they found an announcement for the weekend in the UCG-Germany publication, *Intern*, and contacted the German office to ask if they could attend.

During the activity, one of the families even commented that they would like to attend the Feast of Tabernacles next year.

Paul Kieffer

UCG-British Isles Member Web Site Launched

Items of interest to members will now be made available on the local British Isles Web site at www.ucgmember.org.uk.

The Stirling Feast messages and special music pieces will be available. We may include reports on the work of UCG in Britain, as well as the latest set of national announcements and office updates.

At present the site includes sermonettes and sermons from Brick-et Wood, but it will soon have other messages given by pastors around the country. Audio recordings will be recorded in more locations. A selection that has more interest to the public will continue to be posted in the multimedia section of www.ucg.org.uk.

Peter Hawkins

Update on Elections in Ghana

The brethren in Ghana greatly appreciate the prayers and concern of their brethren around the world.

The opposition party candidate, John Atta Mills, won the election and there has been a peaceful transfer of power.

The runoff elections were extremely close, and the tensions were high around the country, but much to our relief, there was none of the violence so many areas of Africa have experienced over such matters.

There is some hope that the new government will do more to curb corruption, which is rampant all across Africa. An easing of bribes and purchasing favors will encourage free trade and instill a stable economic future.

Thomas Clark

Queensland Ladies' Educational Focus Weekend Held

The seventh annual Queensland Ladies' Educational Focus Weekend was another profitable event enjoyed by all who attended on Nov. 21 to 23, 2008.



Anita Anastasi, Jenean Rivers and Mandy Jennings enjoying a break together (photo by Kim Chick)

The weekend took place at the beautiful Alexander Headlands Conference Centre on the scenic Sunshine Coast.

Over the course of the weekend, the 40 ladies in attendance took part in conferences focusing on this year’s theme “Being Filled With All Joy.”

Unlike happiness, which changes with circumstances, joy remains consistent through all trials and experiences. Joy is inextricably tied to our calling. We saw that joy was something we can all help each other have, and it is something we can share.

In addition to conferences, we also had a women’s gathering tradition of a wine and cheese tasting as well as various team-building games and discussions.

Everyone went home with a commemorative gift—a book of quotes about joy and a bookmark with quotes. We also left with a deeper understanding about the gift of joy with which we all have been blessed and its true source, God.

Jenny Bradford

United Youth Corps in Jordan: Where Are Your Eyes?



by Emily Smith

Before we came to Jordan, we heard all about the hospitality of the people here. We tried to prepare ourselves for drinking lots of tea and for being invited into many homes for dinner. But what struck me most about the people in Jordan goes far beyond the constant supply of tea and coffee. After knowing us for just a few months, they are ready to give us anything within their power.

One example in particular brought to mind the very words of Jesus Christ. Lena VanAusdle and I were riding the bus home one day, when our good friend, Jamal, struck up a conversation with us. He began telling us that he loved us as he loves his sisters and

that if we ever need anything, to just let him know. Then he said something that I found rather thought-provoking. He said, "If you need eyes, I will give you my eyes."

Whether he meant this statement literally or not, it showed an attitude of sacrifice that goes beyond the regular gesture of a mere cup of tea. In John 15:12-13, Jesus said, "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, *than to lay down one's life for his friends*" (emphasis added).

Many times in God's Word we read that love is much more than a fuzzy feeling. In this particular passage, we understand that love is being willing to give up all that we have for the good of another person. But what if that means

giving up something as precious as our eyesight or the very breath we breathe? How can we come to that point, where we are literally willing to lay down our lives for our friends?

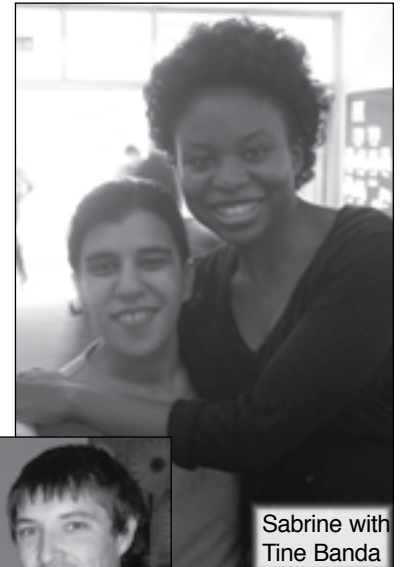
Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:1: "For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Paul understood that this physical life is not all there is. God has given us a hope for a better life to come, eternal life in His family! The life that He promises is far greater than anything physical.

In fact, God actually tells us that focusing on that spiritual life is extremely important. "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but

those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:5-6).

Here we see that focusing on the spiritual is a life-or-death issue. So, where do you set your mind? Do you spend most of your time thinking about physical things, or do you set your mind on the spiritual life to come?

If our focus is on the spiritual, then nothing physical can come between us and serving God. We will truly be able to give up anything in this life, even if that means laying down our lives for our friends. Our friend Jamal



Sabrine with Tine Banda

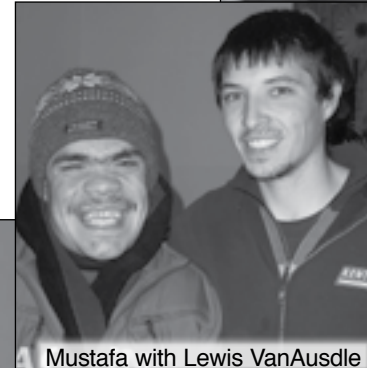
expressed to us a love that reaches deeper than a warm feeling of affection. He showed us a great example of sacrifice that we normally do not find in the world in which we live.

Let's set our mind on things above so that we, too, may be able to say to our friends, "If you need eyes, I will give you my eyes." **UN**

To read more about the life and times of the Jordan Youth Corps volunteers, visit the blog at ucyJordan08.blogspot.com.



Zach Smith and Nasser (photos by Emily Smith)



Mustafa with Lewis VanAusdle

United Youth Corps: Kenya Youth Camp

by Tim Waddle

On Monday, Dec. 22, three Youth Corps participants and I returned to the United States after spending two weeks in Kenya. The annual December visit to Kenya coincides with the Kenya youth camp. This year we had 75 Kenyan teens as campers and about 25 Kenyan staff as well as the Youth Corps volunteers and me.

Camp in Kenya is held at the Fish Eagle Campground along Lake Naivasha. Lake Naivasha is a freshwater lake located in the Great Rift Valley northwest of Nairobi. The altitude is over 6,000 feet,

so the days were warm and sunny while the nights were cool and crisp.

This lake is home to a variety of wildlife and is considered one of the top bird-watching areas in the world. There is also a sizable hippo population in Lake

and supplies. We also set up an area for the kitchen. A group of Kenyan ladies, led by Christine Ndugnu' (the Kenyan elder's wife), came to cook for the campers and staff. They prepared three meals a day outdoors over wood fires with

Keeping the audience's attention is always a challenge when giving a sermon, but it is more difficult when a vervet monkey is behind you checking out food supplies and climbing on top of the tents.

Naivasha. Each year the vervet and the black-and-white colobus monkeys come through the camp. Keeping the audience's attention is always a challenge when giving a sermon, but it is more difficult when a vervet monkey is behind you checking out food supplies and climbing on top of the tents. We also had a family of warthogs wander through the camp on the first day.

The Youth Corps volunteers and a few of the local brethren arrived early at the campsite and set camp. We pitched over 20 tents for the campers, staff

some help from propane burners. No one leaves this camp hungry.

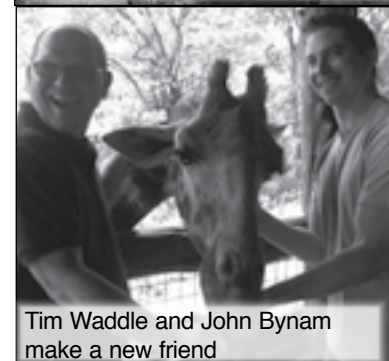
Activities this year included a two-hour boat trip for all the campers on Lake Naivasha, swimming at a nearby hotel pool, football (soccer), a sewing class, cycling, team building, ultimate Frisbee, volleyball, campus improvement and a hygiene class.

We started each day with a Christian Living class. At night we gathered around a campfire and sang hymns, reviewed the day's Christian Living class and enjoyed social time. Each dorm performed a skit in which all had to participate. We watched as David slew Goliath, Ruth married Boaz, 10 virgins bickered over oil and the prodigal son came home.

The camp this year was very profitable for all involved. The Youth Corps participants, John Bynum and Liz Ryan from the Dallas, Texas, area and Tim Charles from Lewistown, Pennsylvania, gave 100 percent in effort. I tried to explain to



A group of campers pose for picture



Tim Waddle and John Bynam make a new friend

Each year the Youth Corps volunteers are a major part of the camp's success. We spent two days at Lake Nakuru National Park after camp and enjoyed an animal safari that included watching two lionesses hunting. On our final Sabbath in Kenya we held services under a large shade tree with combined congregations in Elburgon.

I am grateful for the many people who put in time, effort and prayers to make this camp happen. Most importantly, I give thanks to our God for the blessings we received this year, as the weather was beautiful, the attitudes were positive and the camp was profitable for all involved. **UN**

Go to www.ucgyouthcorps.org for more information about the United Youth Corps and to read a personal account of a volunteer who served in Kenya.



Tim Waddle with Youth Corps volunteers Liz Ryan, Tim Charles and John Bynam

Character Grows as Temps Plummet at Snowy Winter Camp

by Gary Black

Excited campers and staff arrived in Montello, Wisconsin, for the 14th annual UYC Winter Camp. Forty-three staff volunteered to serve the campers and arrived a day early for on-site training. Then on Dec. 29, 83 energetic campers arrived for the camp kick-off orientation. That evening mixer games helped campers get to know each other.

Four inches of fresh snow had fallen over the snow base, so campers enjoyed plenty of snowy activities, including snow football and cross-country skiing. Temperatures were somewhat cold this year, but campers were ready for it with warm clothing.

One unique activity was winter horseback riding. Most campers had ridden horses, but few had done so in the snow.

The downhill snow tubing was fast and exciting. Other outdoor activities included ultimate Frisbee, snow football, outdoor adventure and extreme survival.

Campers did need to warm up occasionally. They did so in several indoor activities like volleyball, dance class and indoor team challenge.

Many valuable lessons were learned. Things like good communication, teamwork and encouragement were



Campers taking a break from snow tubing



Paul Suckling receiving recognition for 40th camp



Campers keep warm playing snow football

emphasized. Godly values and spiritual lessons were part of every activity, as the staff was able to capitalize on the principle of Deuteronomy 6:7, teaching diligently when campers walked by the way, when they lay down and when they rose up.

Campers not only come to camp to have fun with friends, they come to learn more about God and His way of life. We strive to create an environment we call the *Zone*. In the *Zone*, we emphasize godly principles 24/7, as campers learn from their counselors, activity instructors and the ministry.

“Rising Above the World” was this year’s Christian Living theme. Campers were encouraged to rise above the world in all the Christian Living classes. As always, we started each day with a Compass Check—a 20-minute Christian Living lesson to think about

during the day. Campers also participated in leadership class, Christian Living, question-and-answer sessions, life skills class, seminars and studies. This year campers also learned about the Ambassador Bible Center from David Register and were able to ask questions of ABC alumni.

For a Winter Camp first, freezing rain coated every surface during the final night camp dance. This made for a shiny, slick surface over every road

was a very good experience to show how nice the Kingdom will be, and it definitely gives us the drive to stay in

“Camp was awesome!”

the Church.” And one of our younger campers wrote, “It’s a great experience. It was fun. I made new friends and feel closer to God.”

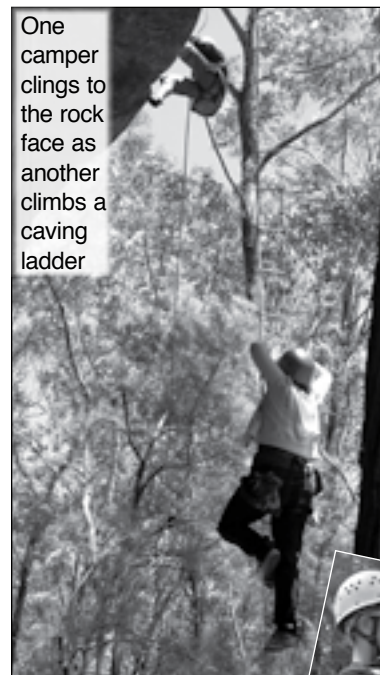
This Winter Camp was also an important one for Paul Suckling, pastor in Worcester, Massachusetts. It marked his 40th camp in 40 years. He had been the director of the camp in Scotland for many years and has been involved in UYC camps as well.

God certainly blessed us with another successful Winter Camp in this Wisconsin winter wonderland. The winter weather

provides a unique environment for God’s youth to learn and grow.

We look forward to holding Winter Camp in the same location next year from Dec. 28, 2009, to Jan. 3, 2010. For more information, please watch for the upcoming *United Youth Camps Magazine*. **UN**

Campers Choose Wambaroo for Summer Camp in Australia



One camper clings to the rock face as another climbs a caving ladder

by Bruce Dean

Summer Camp in Australia just keeps getting bigger!

Camp Wambaroo was held from Friday, Dec. 19, until Sunday, Dec. 28. We had 72 campers and 25 on staff. We had campers from every state and territory except for the Northern Territory and two campers came from

the Pacific nation of Tonga. Also on staff we had four people from overseas. Heather Hirst and Peter Ekama, from America, have been working and studying in Australia. James Moore came from New Zealand and Evan Kovanis traveled from the United States to serve at camp.

The theme for camp was choices. The morning Christian Living classes covered different aspects of choices, such as choosing good health, friends, your future, loyalty, adventure, etc. Grant Chick, associate pastor in Brisbane, gave the first sermon where he showed how the best choice is not the easiest or the most obvious. On the second Sabbath camp director Bruce Dean spoke on whether we are careful choosers or pointless pickers, just following or taking on any ideas.

Our tradition is to designate a boy and girl as “honorary deacons” to organize all the Sabbath service. They, in turn, determine a song leader, opening and closing prayers, hall setup, flowers, announcements,

special music and afternoon teas. We also have two campers give the sermonettes for each Sabbath. Jordan Love, from Melbourne, spoke on not being self-obsessed, and Roger Cant, from western Queensland, spoke on how to make good choices when you reach a crossroad.

During camp we had a series of seminars. The first one was on choosing to value yourself and to value others. Scott Jennings presented a seminar on a balanced approach to the use of exciting technology that is available today. He covered the need to have a personal filter to avoid putting wrong things on one’s Facebook profile, the problem of cyber bullying and pornography. Evan Ware spoke on the dangers of illegal and legal drugs.

“I had heaps of fun and made stacks of friends.”

We had some new activities this year. Camp Wambaroo purchased 20 new mountain bikes just before camp started. Grant Chick and James Moore (the New Zealand representation) took the campers on a course around camp followed by a half-day bike hike. Some campers had to persevere with this, as they had not had much experience on bikes.

Activities included raft making, necklace beading, giant swing, climb-



Campers paddle through rapids after first building their own raft

ing tower, abseiling (rappelling) and rock climbing, crate climbing (the best being 16 crates), dance, archery, team building, volleyball, capture the flag, low ropes, speedball and speech club.

The “Steve Irwin” award went to staff member Scott Grams for rescuing the campers from a yellow-bellied black snake that was in the equipment room and releasing it into the bush. Scott also went down a wombat hole to rescue a volleyball.

The young boys dorm, aged 11 to 13, went on an overnight camp in the bush with no tents and had to cook their own meals. They eventually came back to camp tired, dirty, needing a shave and very hungry.

The evening activities are a big part of our camp. The annual Speech Ban-

quet was held under a big top. We had a dance and games night, a team tabloid sports evening, capture the flag and on the last Sabbath evening we had hymn singing and a large campfire.

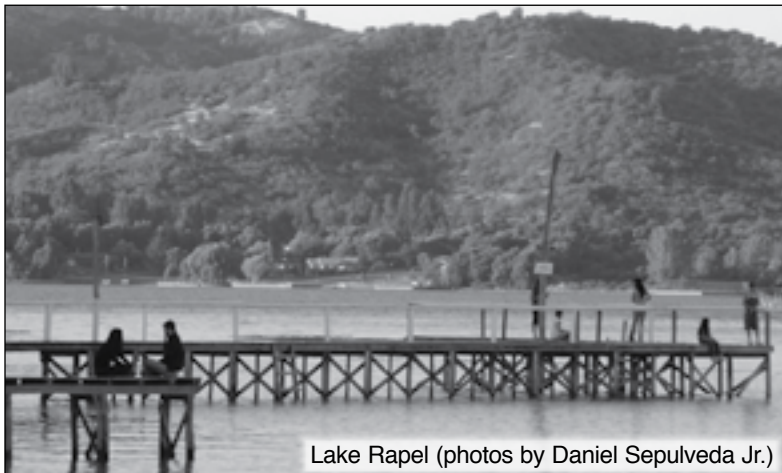
For the final evening the hall was decorated in an African theme along with African music. The young men had to escort the young ladies to the formal evening. The Chick family led many of the campers in Zulu-type dancing. We had our usual fun awards, and the evening finished with dancing.

Many of our campers live in isolated areas, and some only get to church services on Holy Days. For many, they are the only teens in their church areas. Many commented on how camp is a great time to be with teens who believe the same things. One young guy summed it up well: “I had heaps of fun and made stacks of friends.” **UN**



Joseph Latu on the giant swing

Summer Camp in Chile Inspires Leadership in Youth



Lake Rapel (photos by Daniel Sepulveda Jr.)

by Daniel Sepulveda Jr.

From Dec. 22 to 28, the summer camp for South America took place on the shores of beautiful Lake Rapel, located 140 kilometers southwest of the city of Santiago, Chile.

At Rapel, which is an artificial lake, there is a nice combination of warm weather and green, tranquil areas. We were able to build our cabins beside the lake and enjoy seven sunny days and six fresh nights with a perfectly clear sky. This environment invited us to watch and meditate on the infinite universe created by God, which in the city is hard to appreciate.

For seven days 98 youngsters and 14 adults from Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Chile were able to enjoy the camp inspired by our great Creator and His Son. At the end of camp all of us commented on the marvelous opportunity we had for learning from

the instructions given during the Christian Living classes presented by our camp director Saul Langarica, Esteban Rodriguez and Alvaro Matamala. There were also lectures given by some adults and speeches given by several of the youngsters. All of that instruction was, of course, combined with the fun of sports and other activities.

This camp was very blessed by God. It was a privilege to attend.

From the very beginning camp was planned to be a relaxing activity, but at the same time a learning experience. The day started with breakfast at 9 a.m. Then we had a Christian Living class. After that we had one hour called "Remember Your Creator" in which we all went to quiet places to study the Bible, pray, meditate or speak quietly about biblical matters. Before lunch, there was an hour for lectures from

adults and speeches from the campers.

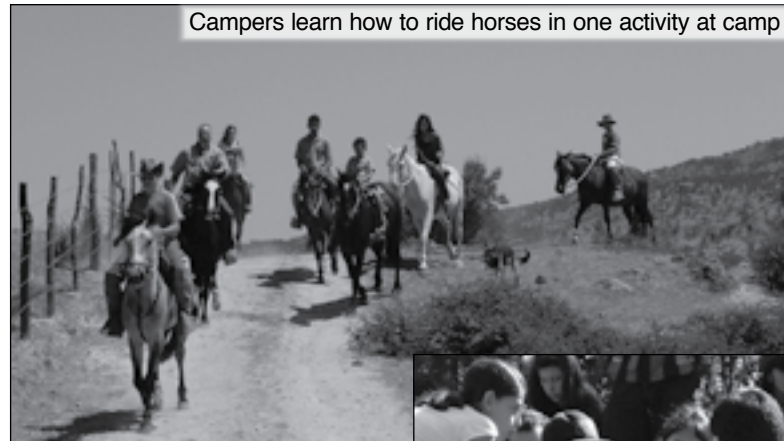
Every day at 3 p.m. the whole group was divided in half. One part of the group went horseback riding, and the other part stayed in the facilities for two hours of relaxation and swimming at the pool. The owner of the camp was also the owner of the horses. He and his two sons helped us in preparing the horses and rode with the group in order to instruct us. After this we all had an *once*, which is a light meal to get energy for the sports part of the day, mainly soccer and volleyball.

After sports came dinner. Over the course of the week, before going to bed, we had organized activities such as two dances, a mini talent show, organized games and two campfires.

Sabbath at camp was very special. Tables and chairs were put under big trees and all youth and adults enjoyed Bible study in the morning and services in the afternoon. Lots of peace and tranquility were present. Elders Fermin

Nain and Jaime Guíñez were in charge of the Sabbath messages.

This year several new teenagers came to camp for the first time. Their participation was very important to us, due to the fact that they made the older teenagers feel more responsible to care for the new campers. The older teenagers learned to develop leadership roles, because several of them served as counselors during camp. Others served



Campers learn how to ride horses in one activity at camp



Campers discuss biblical topics with ministers and elders

as organizers of activities. Daniel Sepulveda, president; Daniela Medina, treasurer; and Barbara Guzman, secretary, served in their positions as main leaders of the youngsters in the area.

At the end of camp we presented gifts to the overall best campers. Ivon Barraza from the Santiago congregation was the overall best camper for the girls. Esteban Morales from the Valdivia, Chile, congregation was the overall best camper for the boys. They both were gladly surprised with the honor.

In summary, this camp was very blessed by God. It was a privilege to attend. In my opinion, it was different from the previous camps. Every day we went to bed so tired that late in the morning we were awakened by the breeze from the lake, the sun and the singing of the birds.

It is for all of these reasons that all of the campers felt a special spirit during the camp for the entire seven days. It was obvious to all that our God was

present in every message and activity. So, on behalf of the campers, we want to thank our great God. We also want to thank all the ladies who made the food for all of us during the whole camp. We thank all of the helpers for making this activity a great success. All of this was made possible by God, His Church and His local leaders. Our gratitude to all for that wonderful labor of love. Until next year! **UN**

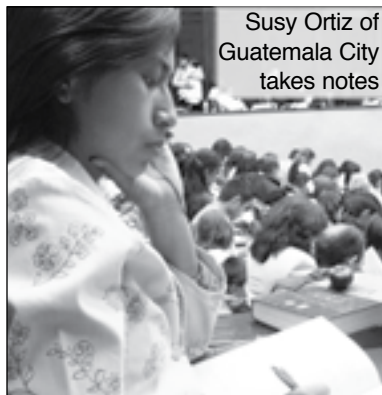
Daniel Sepulveda Jr. attends the Santiago, Chile, congregation and is the president of the youth in his local area.

"Guatemala," continued from page 1

Enthusiasm for the conference was high. The desire to learn and to have personal contact with ministers from the home office was an evident motivation.

For example, we learned that the youth from the Petén region of Guatemala began to sell flowers and other products several months ago in order to raise the funds necessary for travel and accommodations in Guatemala City. The expression of gratitude for these conferences was abundant and appreciated by the presenters.

"The people in Latin America are overwhelmingly warm and hospitable, but what impressed me most was this group of 10 young people from Petén, who started saving money and doing projects a year ago and traveled eight hours by bus to attend the leadership training.



Susy Ortiz of Guatemala City takes notes

I was impressed by their dedication and desire to learn leadership at such a young age," commented Mr. Kilough.

The Sabbath began with split-sermon messages from Mr. Welty and Mr. Pinelli. Mr. Welty presented the topic "Your Role in God's Plan," which was followed by Mr. Pinelli's presentation, "Developing a Steadfast Spirit." After a lunch recess, regular Sabbath services were conducted, with Mr. Welty giving the sermonette and Mr. Kilough the sermon. The attendance for the morning session was 354, and attendance for the afternoon Sabbath services was 346. The normal Sabbath attendance in Guatemala City is about 200.

After sunset the Guatemalan congregations presented an evening of entertainment for the visitors from the United States and other countries. This was a presentation of traditional songs and dances from the region that helped the visitors appreciate the folklore and customs of Guatemala. The guests were impressed with the quality of the music and dances as well as the enthusiasm with which they were presented.

The regular sessions of the leadership workshop began on Sunday for all who wished to participate in the conference. Mr. Pinelli opened the conference with a lecture on baptismal counseling. This was followed by a lecture by Mr. Welty on understanding the differences in personality and temperament in self and others. Members were attentive, taking

notes and quietly giving full attention to the lectures. The attendance for the morning session was 289.

Mr. Pinelli began the afternoon session after lunch on the topic of spiritual effectiveness. This was followed by Mr. Welty's lecture on developing wisdom and judgment.

Richard Pinelli remarked, "In all my 53 years in the Church I have never seen so many children sit for two days quietly and respectfully during the 16 hours of lectures and sermons. Many young people and children came up to speak with us and give us warm hugs of love and respect for what was given. It was awesome and an unforgettable experience."

Monday was reserved for the ministers and deacons (and wives). The lectures were tailored for topics more of a ministerial nature. Mr. Pinelli began the morning session with a lecture on biblical guidelines for elders and wives. This was followed by Mr. Welty who spoke about split and full sermons. After lunch Mr. Pinelli spoke on the one-point sermonette. Mr. Kilough brought the conference to a close, speaking about the heart of a pastor. Attendance for the Monday conference was 46 (plus four children who were also present).

On Tuesday the Kiloughs, Pinellis, Walkers and Mr. Welty were driven to the beautiful Lake Atitlán by the Mundos. While at Lake Atitlán, the U.S. visitors had the opportunity not only to

relax in an idyllic setting but also had the opportunity to speak with the Mundos and Walkers about the work of the Church in Guatemala as well as discuss life in Guatemala in general. The group returned to Guatemala City on Friday in order to prepare for services the next day.

On the Sabbath Mr. Welty gave the sermonette and Mr. Pinelli gave the sermon. On Sunday the U.S. group returned to Cincinnati. The Walkers remained in Guatemala until Tuesday and then traveled to neighboring El Salvador.

"This was my first time in Guatemala, and I was impressed by the warmth and friendliness of the brethren, and even more so by the friendliness of the teens and the sweetness and warmth of the children. The members genuinely were very desirous to learn about leadership and service. Traveling internationally is always broadening and educational, and it is a reminder that every culture has its many strengths," reflected Mr. Welty.

Members' reaction to the conferences was enthusiastic and appreciative. They welcomed the valuable information provided.

"The Leadership Conferences presented in Guatemala left us the impression that an organizational structure exists in the Church of God. The members saw this as evidence that this is a worldwide work in which we are involved and that we have authorities who support us in it. We need direction to educate us and to



Waiting to present gifts to the visiting ministers and wives

upgrade us in a wide range of training, which provides the necessary vision in the ministerial approach as it focuses on the gospel," stated Héctor Pérez, member, Guatemala City congregation.

Mauricio Pinto, a minister from El Salvador, commented on how much the conferences helped him see his shortcomings and how to overcome and improve as a minister.

"During the time that I have been in the Church we have never had the opportunity to hear personnel from the home office presenting conferences on leadership. But now we were able to receive topics which have motivated all of the members and especially our leaders and potential leaders to serve more effectively," said Luis Mundo, pastor of the congregations in Guatemala. **UN**

Leon Walker is the regional director for the Spanish-speaking areas.

“WFW,” continued from page 1

Returning staples of the Winter Family Weekend—the Family Novelty Olympics; the bluegrass, country and rock jam sessions; the Family Fun Fair; and karaoke—were held in the evenings after full days of sports and seminars. Also of note was the Family Fun Fair’s shaved ice fund-raising sale, which raised \$1,000 toward a

\$2,000 water pump needed for Church members in Zambia.

Mark Winner, the organizational driving force behind the Winter Family Weekend, wishes to “once again thank everyone who served in any capacity at this year’s event. We simply could not have the success we have without everyone’s heartfelt prayers and loving, serving support. I am sure God is well pleased with what He sees

exhibited in all the serving that takes place at this event.”

On Friday night and Saturday morning, a veritable host of seminars were available to attendees, all of which reflected the weekend’s theme, “Called to Lead.” The main ballroom was filled on the Sabbath with 1,579 people for church services. The sermon, given by Richard Thompson, reviewed the command to follow Christ and examined what kind of commitment and lifestyle changes it takes to obey that command.

Following Sabbath services, the weekend concluded with an all-Ambassador reunion, a costume dance for the teens and a dance for the young adults with an “Italian Charm Décor” theme.

Attendees’ good examples did not go unnoticed by the Galt House staff, which commented on several occasions that the group was the most polite youth/family group they had ever had at their hotel.

Those who attended this year are highly encouraged to fill out the brief Winter Family Weekend survey (available at www.ucg.org/familyweekend). The responses you provide are a big help toward improving future Winter Family Weekends, Mr. Winner said.

Many are already turning their focus to this year’s Winter Family Weekend, which is now 10 months away. It will be hosted once again at the Galt House, from Tuesday evening, Dec. 22, to Saturday, Dec. 26. Those looking to make their reservations early may begin Oct. 26, 2009, after the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles. **UN**



Becky Bennett, top, teaches Sabbath school; Clyde Kilough shows the mechanical bull who’s boss (left); and Novelty Olympics showcases many talents (photos by Jane McConnaughey, Michelle de Campos and Karen Deaton)

Ambassador Alumni Reunite at WFW



Rhonda and Henry Mez, Richard Thompson and Chris and Angela Moen (photos by Elizabeth Cannon)

by Gary Antion

More than 200 former Ambassador graduates and their families attended the Ambassador Reunion at the Winter Family Weekend sponsored by Ambassador Bible Center after Sabbath services on Dec. 27. Those in attendance were treated to an array of finger foods and Barb Antion’s famous baklava. Two beautiful and delicious cakes were also on display and were served by ABC students from the class of 2009.



Melody Schmidt serves cake

Throughout the two-hour event, various drawings for prizes took place. Although the big prizes were \$20 Starbucks cards in an ABC mug filled with chocolates, the biggest treat was the opportunity to fellowship with friends and to catch up on what has been happening in their lives. Memorabilia and yearbooks from many of Ambassador’s years were available for reminiscing.

Special thanks go to Jorge, Kathy and Michelle de Campos for assisting in set up. Terri Eddington, Shirley Davis and Mary Ann Delfino were in charge of serving the cake and were aided by ABC 2009 students. Thanks also go to Ina McLemore and Ralph Levy for making sure the cakes arrived from Cincinnati for the event. Also, we want to recognize the Galt House staff for doing a wonderful job of displaying the cakes and the food items.

The evening ended all too soon as the alumni said their farewells for another year. **UN**

Members Recall Their Baptism Stories

■ Members relate the inspiring stories of their callings and baptisms.

Lose Your Life

Brought up in the Church and fallen away for nine years, I worked as a chef. I had been running with the cool crowd—partying, using drugs and having the “time of my life.” I needed real change, and I needed help but didn’t really know how. I decided to visit church again to see if that would help.

“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matthew 16:25).

I still remember reading this verse to myself as I had just quit my job in the only career for which I was qualified and trained. Just from the sheer desire of wanting to change my life and trust in God, I had taken the biggest leap of faith I had ever taken. I decided to tell my employer that I was now going to keep the Sabbath. That didn’t go over so well at the five-star French restaurant where Friday nights and Saturdays were the biggest days of the week. So I gave my two-week notice. I had absolutely no idea what I was doing, but at the same time I just knew I wanted changes in my life.

I didn’t know how to change, but I just started reading the Bible and

the booklets from the Church. I started praying and fasting again on a regular basis. I didn’t know if I was doing things right, but I knew I was trying. The more I read and went to Church, the more the fire inside of me increased for God’s knowledge and truth.

My girlfriend, on the other hand, was overwhelmed with all of this new information and lifestyle. She did start reading and praying, which resulted in spiritual matters consuming a lot of our conversations. She even went to church and part of the Feast one year. Finally she admitted that she didn’t think she could live her life like this. After that statement, I knew our relationship had to end. We were both crushed. I just had to believe and trust in God that it was the right decision.

For two years I worked on my own, and God really provided what I needed when I needed it. But it was also very hard, and my faith was tested every month. During these transitional years, I was also trying to work on myself and continue the quest of being better for God. I had gotten baptized but was still struggling with getting over old habits. Slowly but surely, I was getting sin out of my life.

I had given up basically everything I knew—my job, my beliefs, my lifestyle, my love. The things I still need-

ed to give up, God made apparent to me, and some lessons still had to be learned the hard way. I never gave up the idea of wanting to change and wanting to be better.

In five years, giving up everything that I thought I knew has resulted in becoming a new man with a new heart, getting married, buying my first home and trying to live God’s way each and every day.

I had given up everything that I had thought was important to me, but I found out that what really is worth living for is God’s truth and understanding the right way to live in His love while trusting Him as our Heavenly Father.

When you’re young, you don’t know how life is really going to be or how hard it can be at times. Submitting to God in everything, trusting and believing Him is not easy, and sometimes it is painful. But when you have persevered and emerge on the other side, it is the best thing that anyone can experience. Now I know I had to go through some of the growing pains to become a son of God, but I can truly say that I have found my life.

*Judd Servidio
Austin, Texas, congregation*

“Something Just ‘Snapped’”

My grandmother, Lillie Rowe Jones, and my mother, Bonnie Duncan, taught me all my life that Saturday was the

Sabbath. I grew up listening to Herbert W. Armstrong with them. We didn’t have a lot of understanding about how to keep the Sabbath until we found the Church while in the process of moving from Fort Worth to Longview, Texas, and started attending there.

It seems strange to me the things I don’t remember about my decision to stay in God’s Church when parts of it are so totally clear in my mind. I was 11 years old when we started attending. When I was 13 I was listening to a sermon in the “field house” (as we used to call it), and something just “snapped” in my brain. I told myself, “This is God’s Church, and I’m staying.” The strange parts are that I cannot remember who was speaking or what specifically was said that made me determine that. I sure am glad I did though! I was baptized March 14, 1968, in Houston, Texas.

*Margaret Duncan Howard
Columbus, Ohio, congregation*

A Calling Late in Life

I had been Catholic for 70 years and am now living in a senior resident facility. I had been going to chapel there for mass every week, but I could not pay attention, no matter how I tried. I tried setting up and taking down the chapel and doing the readings, but it didn’t help. I was very discouraged and thought I would have to continue this way until I died.

One week, I was going shopping in the van provided by the resident facility. When I entered, I noticed that the driver had a Bible in his lap. After the shopping was over, I went up to the driver and talked to him about his Bible. I told him I was a Catholic and that they never taught me the Bible. He said that he would be happy to teach me.

I have very bad eyes, and he got me a large-print Bible, which I dearly love. He also gave me many Church brochures from United Church of God, which I read and took notes from. A number of months later, after I read the booklet on baptism, I told him that I wanted to be rebaptized.

At that time, I started meeting with an elder and a deacon from the Church, and I also read many more booklets from the Church. I had the chance to go to a church service; I loved it all. They then decided that I was ready for baptism. I was baptized on Sept. 18, 2006.

My experience turned my whole life upside down, and I have never felt so close to God. Now I know that I have been called by God. I try hard every day to obey all the commandments. I read the Bible every day, and I am almost finished with it for the third time. Each time, I understand more. I got this calling quite late in my life, and I am not going to let go.

*Mary C. Radtke
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, congregation*

Treasure Digest

Are You Full of Fervent Heat?

Warmth was on my mind as I looked at the thermometer this morning and saw a temperature reading zero degrees Fahrenheit. The Wisconsin winter is fully upon us, and I wish it were warmer.

As I ponder the freezing temperature outside, I am reminded of God's encouragement to us to remember a similar spiritual point found in Revelation 3. Last among the letters to the churches was the instruction to the church in Laodicea. As God gave instruction to each church, He listed good points and areas of caution for each. For Laodicea, however, He desired only that they be either hot or cold. What a curious thing to say! Hot we can understand, but why cold?

God wants to know where we stand. At least if we are cold, there is no ambiguity, no guessing which side we have picked. In writing to the churches, God was recording His desire for them to be focused on Him first and foremost—no matter the physical difficulties, no matter the change in circumstances, no matter how the world around them functioned. His desire for Laodicea was no different; He wanted them to “be hot” for Him. The Greek word there for “hot” is the word *zestos*, which literally means, “boiled” or “fervently hot.” Lukewarm, on the other hand, is tantamount to sitting on the fence, not committing either way. God wants us to be hot—to be on fire for His way of life—not lukewarm.

The problem for the church in Laodicea was that they had been distracted by the prosperity of the culture around them. They had received some of the riches of the economy around them through the trade of locally grown, fine black wool and eye powder developed through a school of medicine in the vicinity. After an earthquake devastated the area, the community was so wealthy that they turned down aid from Rome and rebuilt the area

themselves. It is possible that even the members of the local church congregation began to trust in this physical wealth.

God uses analogies referring to the primary source of that wealth to underscore a lesson. “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see” (Revelation 3:17-18).

Even though they had fine clothes and medicine for eye problems, spiritually they were naked and blind, because they had taken their focus off of God and put their trust in those commodities. While those whom God has not called are indifferent to a God-focused life, we in the Church should know better. We know that we cannot place our trust in physical things, and yet we can allow those things to take our focus off of God. God wants all of mankind to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4); that is to say, He wants us to be hot, as He desires in Revelation 3:15. If, however, someone decides not to follow God's way of life, He would rather it be clear.

Where do we stand? Are we cold, or even lukewarm, like so much of the world around us? Or are we full of fervent heat for God?

While we experience the deep cold of the winter around us, let's be reminded that we should be full of heat for God's way of life. The Sabbath day is just one stop along the way where we can draw on that warmth from God and each other. Let's be zealous to make the most of what God has given us.

Dan Dowd

Pastor, Milwaukee, Oshkosh and Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, congregations

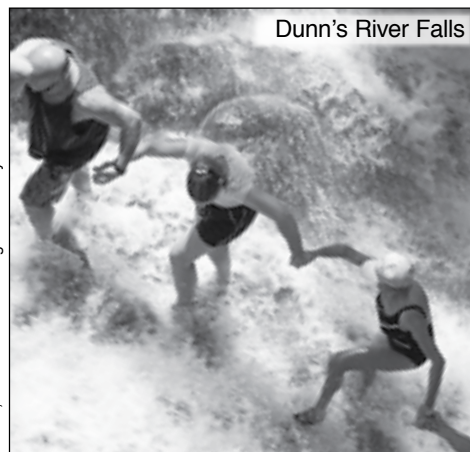
Holding Hands

One of the most visited spots in Jamaica is world-famous Dunn's River Falls. From the base of the cascading waterfalls, visitors can make a

600-foot climb. It is invigorating and spectacular!

Although trained guides are present to lead climbers along the path of the waterfall, slick rocks and pitfalls are literally just under the water. So one of the equally famous aspects of the attraction is the necessity of holding hands.

That's right! Hand-in-hand like a human daisy chain, guided by competent staff, each climber holds on for dear life to the person behind and the one ahead. Soaking wet, each person clings tightly to his or her neighbor. Children grab hold to parents and strangers; men and women alike hold onto and help one another. It is a wonderful metaphor for facing danger and life together, with each person looking out for the welfare of others. And at the end of the climb? Success!



One day, our world will learn that simple lesson of Dunn's River Falls, that we help one another win by holding hands and serving one another.

We are encouraged and strengthened today by the support of the ministry, friends and brethren. In the future we, too, can be there to help men, women, boys and girls in God's Kingdom. For us today, God holds our hands; we, in turn, can help one another succeed.

John Fox

Salt Lake City, Utah, congregation

Will It Matter?

When my dad was dying of congestive heart failure, I drove about a thousand miles to see him. He had been sent home from the hospital with the news that there was nothing else to be done for him.

As my dad lay in the hospital bed that was sent home with him, I tried not to show the cringe I felt inside at seeing him shrunken, gasping for breath and not able to even turn himself over.

I was able to visit only a day and a half before I had to drive back home. We talked about good times. I sat up with him all night, caring for him the best I could.

My visit cheered up my dad a bit. It was hard to see him suffer. It was hard to leave him with exhausted family members who I wished I could have relieved, but I lived too far away. And all too soon, I had to drive back to my own family, knowing I would never see him again in this age.

The day after I got home, I went to see a lady I had been caring for during the last year. She had fallen and broken her hip recently and was being sent to a physical rehabilitation center in her hometown. She was also suffering from heart failure. She was supposed to have died, the doctors said, in a month or two, but I had cared for her for 10 months.

The next morning, at 5 a.m., she died in her sleep.

Even when we know death is near, it is still our enemy and it is still not so easy to face. I felt like death was all around me. I told a few friends about what had happened, and I was encouraged knowing they were praying for me. But most of all, I was encouraged by the response and comfort I felt from God as I prayed to Him about these things.

But facing death like this has reminded me of what is truly important.

The daughter of the lady I cared for had often complained about the messes her mother made in her house. Now she says how much she misses those messes and wishes she could see them again.

When Christ returns, will someone's spilled drink matter anymore? Will the times other people were rude to us matter then? Will the pain that

Turning the Hearts . . . What's in a Name?

Last issue we covered the importance of learning to share with our families. In this issue, I'd like to explore the importance of our names!

When you were born, your folks likely had a name picked out for you. My mother longed for a daughter and had the name “Marlene” picked out, but my brother Dave, her firstborn, wouldn't have liked to be called “Marlene.” When she learned she was pregnant again, she still longed for a daughter and had the name “Doreen” picked out for me. When she discovered I was a boy, I was named Gary.

While we all have our own stories about how we received our first names, it is our last names that really matter the most. What kind of reputation does your last name have? One family called the “Dupes” (fictitious name to protect the real family) had a reputation for laziness, criminal activity and poverty. To have a handle like that, with the reputation that came with it, must have been difficult to surmount. Another family, the Edmonds (also fictitious), had a reputation for community service and honesty. A child with the “Edmonds” name would have an edge in life.

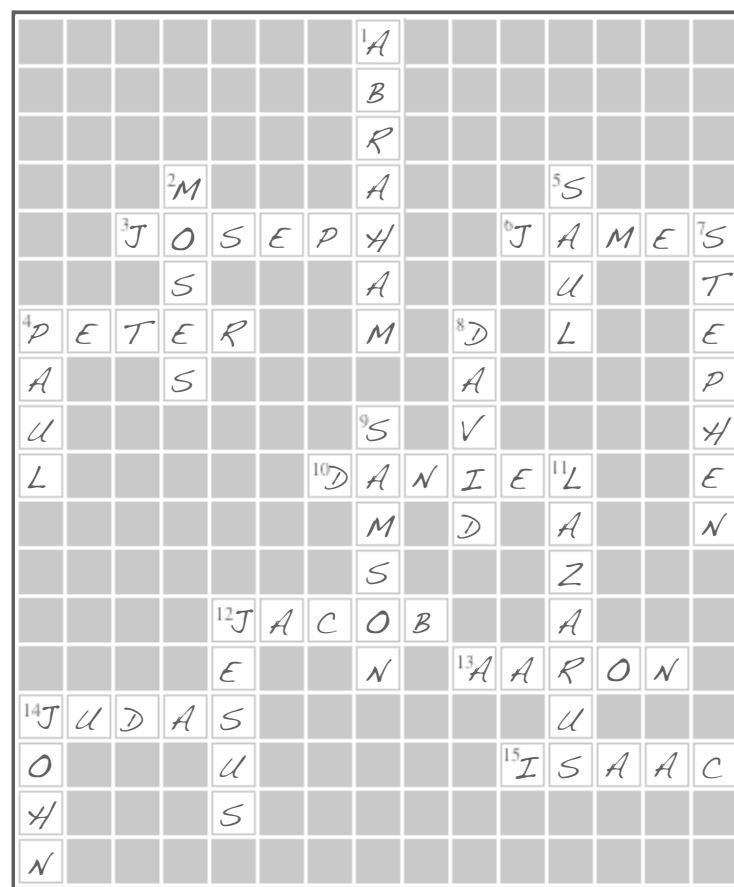
What do we do with our names? Do we bring honor to the name and give those who follow an edge? Or do we degrade it and pass it on to others who then have to cope with it? I knew a family in which the eldest son made good grades and was involved in athletics and student council. The succeeding children also made good grades and were involved in sports and in student service at the same school. Teachers expected each child from that family to follow in the footsteps of the previous family member.

That is why we read in Ecclesiastes 7:1, “A good name is better than precious ointment.” Your family has given you not only your first name, but your last name. It is up to all of us to enhance our family names by the good character we can attach to them and to help our siblings and children have a better chance of succeeding in life. If your name was not honored by a parent or sibling, then determine yourself to bring honor to it. Then, you will pass on a good name to your children.

Gary E. Antion



ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLE



a sibling, a friend or even a parent inflicted on us matter? Will we be concerned about rude drivers who cut us off in traffic or harsh bosses?

Will such things even be remembered then? Those things will be long forgotten. We will have learned to ask God to forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors (Matthew 6:12).

When Christ returns, the little hurts, as well as the big hurts, will not matter as much; and knowing this should make it easier for us to let go of them now. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Carolyn Prater
Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregation

Facing Hard Times With Brutal Optimism

When we face hard times, it is easy to focus on our problems to the point that we become discouraged. As our world faces an economic downturn, higher unemployment and uncertain times, we may have to adjust our lifestyle to the new realities. But by looking at our current circumstances in a positive manner, problems or setbacks can be opportunities to develop godly character (Romans 5:3-4).

During the darkest days of World War II, then British Prime Minister Winston Churchill faced traumatic times due to Nazi Germany's aggression. Yet he was able to rally the British people to become optimistic, develop their resources and focus on their goals.

The curmudgeonly, tough-minded, 65-year-old politician did not put on a false smile or talk unrealistically about the battles that lay before them. In his first address to the House of Commons on a Sunday night in May of 1940, he declared: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat." Yet laced with his blunt realism was an undaunted optimistic spirit and belief that the ill-equipped British nation would be victorious.

He closed his speech by focusing on one goal. "You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: victory. Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival" (William Manchester, *The Last Lion*, p. 678).

Someone once expressed the importance of focusing on what we have instead of what we do not have.

"As you travel through life's highway, may it ever be your goal; to keep your eye upon the doughnut, and not upon the hole!"

The apostle Paul instructed: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Let's focus on the goals, opportunities and blessings we have rather than on the "holes."

Rod Hall
Seattle, Washington, congregation

Got Wisdom?

As a young man, I always appreciated short sayings. Most of them were humorous and gave a little chuckle. There were many sayings that you may have heard from your mother or grandmother like

"make hay while the sun shines" and "idle minds are the devil's playground."

Most of these sayings are good, and we can learn much from them. They are like short sermons—bits of advice that are easy to remember and easy to recall as needed. They give us direction in morality and teach us about how to approach work, studies and relationships.

There is a place where we can find a whole catalog

of good advice. It's the book of Proverbs in the Bible.

Wisdom is not a measurement of how smart we are. Instead, it means using our knowledge in the right way to produce good results and avoid the bad. Proverbs says it is the "principal thing," meaning it is the most important thing we can learn (Proverbs 4:7, King James Version throughout). There are a lot of extremely intelligent people out there, and I've

met a few who do not have the sense to come in out of the rain, because they lack wisdom.

Notice the list of the good things we can learn from reading the book of Proverbs: "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; to know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels" (Proverbs 1:1-5). Looking up these verses in different translations can also add to our understanding.

Some proverbs are easily understood. Proverbs 20:22 reads: "Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee." Proverbs 29:18 advises, "Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

A Few Proverbs Assignments

With other proverbs it is easy to miss the real point. For instance, Proverbs 1:8-9 reads, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck."

What are these chains? You might jump to the conclusion they are chains of slavery or ropes that tie you up and restrain you. In fact, after further study, you can discover that they are beautiful necklaces that indicate royalty. They are worn by kings and princes who exercise power and authority with wisdom. Look up this passage in some commentaries or even reference books that help explain the proverbs. They can be helpful in explaining these fine points.

After you have learned some basic principles from the book of Proverbs, progress to learning about the seven pillars of wisdom. Try linking the Proverbs to other scriptures and lessons. For example, relate Proverbs 16:7 with 1 Peter 3:8-13.

Bibles with center margin references can also be helpful. Group together the Proverbs that deal with morality, wisdom, fools, economics, etc.

Get the kids involved in the study. As you teach them to your children, you might even learn additional wisdom yourself!

Steven J. Kieler
Tampa, Florida, congregation

Share Your Treasures!

Do you have any short items of biblical wisdom, humor or practical information that you would like to share? Please send them to your local pastor and ask him to forward them to *United News* at the home office. Guidelines available on request (UN@ucg.org).

Children's Corner

WHERE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD IS...

THE APOSTLE PAUL?

(ANSWERS IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE)

1. BAM! PAUL IS STRUCK DOWN BLIND ON THE ROAD TO _____ (ACTS 9:1-9).
2. HERE'S WHERE PAUL BEGINS HIS MISSIONARY JOURNEYS _____ (ACTS 13:1-3).
3. THE DISCIPLES ARE HELPING PAUL ESCAPE TO THE CITY OF _____ AFTER HIDING HIM IN A LARGE BASKET AND LETTING HIM DOWN THROUGH THE CITY WALL! (ACTS 9:23-26).
4. PAUL IS BAPTIZING LYDIA THE PURPLE CLOTH SELLER IN THE CITY OF _____ (ACTS 16:11-15).
5. OH NO! ON THE WAY TO ITALY, PAUL GETS SHIPWRECKED ON THIS ISLAND CALLED _____! (ACTS 27:39-44; 28:1).

ANTIOCH

DAMASCUS

JERUSALEM

MAP CREATED BY JEREMY LALLIER; PUZZLE WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH CANNON

Children's Corner



From the Word

Reflections From Behind Bars

■ On Oct. 8, 2008, UCG member Jed Sy and her brother Jong Pilapil were sentenced to life imprisonment for a crime they say they never committed. In the following article, which first appeared in the *United News Asia* July/August 2007 issue, we read of Jed's experience in her own words.

by Jed Pilapil Sy

It is by God's grace that I am able to sit down at this very moment and put all these thoughts and feelings into writing. I was at first hesitant to do this, knowing it would only cause me trouble. But with all my fervent prayer, I fully understand God's message to me, which prompted me to do this, believing that His words spoken to me are powerful and can truly help make a difference in the lives of other people.

Many times I have been full of confusion and doubts, to the point that I have lost hope because of injustice. But deep inside my heart I know I should not think this way, because God has a purpose in everything that happens to me.

Persecuted, but Not Forsaken

It was two years ago that I was brought to the PDEA (Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency) office. I almost lost my sanity thinking I would be in prison—a dungeon! I cried day and night, because I was helpless. My 3-year-old daughter and my loyal house-helper Daday were the

only people with me while the policemen were interrogating me.

Everybody was looking at me, especially the media people who never stopped sensationalizing our case, whether on TV or in newspapers. They didn't seem to bother digging for the whole truth or even want to respect our privacy. I felt depressed and did not know who to turn to or trust, except to God, who was my only Defender. My heart was aching when I saw my baby, so hungry, because it was already past 8 in the evening, and we were still at the PDEA office. She was forced to eat the food offered to us. The rice was almost spoiled.

The worst thing that happened was when most of the people whom I called "friends" turned their backs on me. I do not hold grudges against them, because God is merciful; I prayed that their hearts would be touched. There were lots of people who offered their help, but again to my dismay, they were not actually helping but rather adding to my burden and taking advantage of my situation.

I was hopeless, then, because I did not know what to do or where to go. I had unfinished business that needed to be settled, but I could not do anything about it while being in prison. Neither could my family help me, because they did not want more problems. What I did was lift up everything to God—my worries, fears and confusion—believing He would be the one to direct every step I would make.

God heard my prayer, and I am very thankful to those people who untiringly extended their support: my widowed mother Jessica who takes care of my little daughter, my auntie Cynthia, my best friend Liza, my fellow Church members, Mr. and Mrs. Macaraeg and their family for



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their heartfelt prayers and support, all those people who spent their time visiting me personally in jail and all the people who continue to believe in me and trust me for who I am, and especially my jail guards.

I have learned that in every problem we encounter, the first and foremost solution is to turn to God and fervently pray without ceasing that He will help us and guide every decision we make. Everything will turn out well if we really believe in Him and trust fully in His power.

I hope this observation will also help you realize my mistake, because I don't want you to reach the point of no return.

I had lots of questions and confusion over why my brother and I had to suffer, when in fact we were completely innocent. No matter how I explained it to the people around me—to our lawyers, to all those who were asking me—nothing changed! I wanted to shout to everybody, especially to the

judge of RTC (Regional Trial Court) Branch 9, that we did not deserve to be in jail! But I've come to realize God loves us and purposely put us in jail to train us spiritually to live blamelessly so that we may have eternal life with Him.

The incident is still fresh in my mind when my whole world turned to a nightmare; I don't even want to talk about it. I lost my beloved husband Allan, who is even now still missing, and we do not know where he is or what really happened to him. I almost went insane when my precious baby girl, Tin Tin, was taken home to our province with my relatives on the evening of Jan. 4, 2005, because I was locked up behind bars. I shouted for justice, but my plea fell upon the deaf ears of the PDEA. It was so painful that I could hardly accept what happened. To summarize this whole matter, again: This was God's will. He has a purpose!

Faith in God's Plan

Now, I have been in jail for more than two years [editor's note: Jed Sy has been in prison for four years as of this printing], and one thing that I am always grateful for is the grace of God and His Holy Spirit, which gave me and continues to give me strength to move on, face this trial and overcome my weaknesses.

It is nice to say, "Thank you, God. Thank you for the wonderful blessings." But I realized it is not enough to be only thankful, I should also do something in return. If we can pay favors to people who did something good to us, why can't we do that to God? If we can love our husband and our children to the point that we are willing to sacrifice everything for them, why can't we do the same for God? Different people judge me according to what they see in me, but what is important is how I respond to the calling that God offers me.

Letters From Behind Bars

When Daniel Macaraeg, managing editor of *United News Asia*, visited the Davao City jail in November and December 2008, Jed Sy, her brother Jessie Jones "Jong" Pilapil and their mother Jessica Yu Pilapil gave him letters written to the brethren in United Church of God.

The following are excerpts from those letters.

From Jed Sy, Oct. 14, 2008:

When they [Jim and Sharron Franks and Daniel Macaraeg] arrived, I was overwhelmed with joy, and I couldn't help my tears from rolling down my cheeks to feel God's presence—His love and care for us [showing us that] we are not alone in the midst of the unfair judgment given to us by a human court...

During our conversation, I was sentimentally moved when Mr. Franks and his wife Sharron told me that a lot of you knew about us, extending your greetings and heart-[felt] messages and prayers and even groan upon hearing our fate. God is mysteriously working, touching the hearts of strangers as brothers and sisters in Christ, to give us comfort in our lowest times.

I want to let you know that your overflowing concerns have greatly helped us deal [with] the tumultuous event of our lives with God's divine intervention. My whole family is very much blessed [to have]

everyone[s] support. We are amazed [at] the marvelous things God showed us—His grace and mercy and the strength to accept His will are beyond our human imagination. Truly, God is alive and He is faithful to His promises...

My fellow brethren, I encourage you to continue to hold on closer to God in faith, no matter what life may bring you, in whatever state you are right now. He is the ultimate real Joy-giver, though "my flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalm 73:26). After all, our duty is to fear God and keep His commandments...

Though we were not given justice in our case, we have our confidence in God, that He is "a God of truth and without injustice" (Deuteronomy 32:4). He is our only hope in this evil world and we believe He has better plans for all of us, giving glory and honor to His name.

From Jessie Jones "Jong" Pilapil, Nov. 15, 2008:

On Oct. 7, 2008, the court finally decided on our case. My life [has] changed much due to the faith that I have. I could not believe [it] when we were unjustly sentenced to life imprisonment. My faith grew stronger than I thought. I felt God was with me carrying the burden for me and my sister. I never lose hope that God eventually will deliver us and set us free. The truth will prevail...

To the members of the Church here in the Philippines and around the world, to those who visited us here in jail, especially to Mr. and Mrs. Franks, Mr. and Mrs. Uy, Mr. and Mrs. Foster and others who lifted us up and gave all their support. To those who wrote me, sending me their thoughts and prayers, you know who you are. On behalf of my family, thank you... Thank you very much for giving us courage and strength to endure and continue to fight this battle that I and my sister are facing now...

From Jessica Yu Pilapil, Dec. 9, 2008:

I am the mother of Jed Pilapil Sy and Jessie Jones Pilapil who are presently detained in jail, and I would like to convey my sincere thanks and deep gratitude to all of you for your continuous prayers and encouragement through letters and cards painstakingly made. Your effort to write wonderful and inspiring messages gave them and our family more strength, courage and faith in God...

We believe that God is in control of everything. We completely submitted to His will and fully trust in Him for deliverance, because He knows the whole truth, that my children are innocent of the [charge]. Even if they were unjustly sentenced to life imprisonment, nevertheless, we do not lose hope, because nothing is impossible with God. We just wait patiently for His due time to set my children free. We greatly honor God for bestowing His grace and mercy, for giving us the peace of mind and spiritual freedom and for being able to accept His will for us.

Yes, when I first entered this jail, I thought it was a big shame, suffering and persecution, but I found out through my personal experiences with the help of the Holy Spirit and God's wisdom, that I should count it as joy. God gave me the chance to reform, to repent and to persevere so that I will become a better person and be a good example to my fellow inmates and the people around me (1 Peter 3:8-17). Surely, all of us must learn and realize the things we need to change.

Maturing Spiritually in a Fiery Trial

My life in jail is full of challenges every day, trying to live my life the way God wants it to be, or should I say, according to His will and way! It's easy to say I want to live my life and submit to His will; but in reality it is really hard, knowing that we are living in this present evil world where there is very little room for God's way

of life. People are more focused on how to cope with busy lives, longing for fame and power, rather than abiding by God's commandments and His laws.

I've been asking God in prayer to set my brother and me free. I understand why we are still here. It is because we have not yet matured spiritually and have not faithfully followed His commands. I was struck with the passage in 1 John 3:22, which says, "And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." It teaches me patience, to wait for His answers in His time.

I was weak, but now I realize that all these pains, stupid mistakes and persecutions have contributed much to my spiritual growth. I praise God for filling me with His Word through my Bible study, because it greatly helps open my mind to understand

the things I have been through and helps me be more equipped with spiritual knowledge whenever I encounter trials in my life.

When I tried to recall all these things, I am overwhelmed with joy to know that God is with me, though I went through those fiery troubles in my life. I stand firm in my faith and abide by His commandments. I asked God to give me wisdom to discern right from wrong, because no matter how many material riches I have, I consider myself nothing if I do not have the wisdom from heaven (James 3:17).

I am fervently praying to God that other people may also have wisdom and God's grace so that we can live peaceably with our fellow men and most of all with God.

It is indeed an honor and privilege to get wisdom, because not all can have this gift. But God has promised to give us wisdom if we fear Him.

According to James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

We need to fear God so that we can attain that wisdom (Proverbs 9:10).

The Conclusion of the Whole Matter

Now I realize that in all aspects of our lives, no matter who we are or what we have, we need to fear God. This does not mean fright or terror but rather a good relationship with Him based on reverence and respect for Him and His commands. How can we be saved spiritually if we do not start to change our lives, to do those things that are pleasing in His sight?

I believe there is always hope and room to change as long as we live, but we should start now before we regret and suffer the consequences. Ecclesiastes ends with a passage

that has helped me to come to realize these things, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

I am praying my words will help us open our minds to the truth and give us a lesson to learn, to keep and to do. I am not saying I am fully righteous or perfect, because no one is yet perfect, but we need to strive hard to live in righteousness as God requires. **UN**

Jed Sy is a member of the United Church of God in the Philippines, serving a life sentence in Davao City. For more information regarding her case, read the update in "News From Around the World," page 3. More on her story can also be found in the Oct. 30 and Jan. 17 episodes of About Our Father's Business on the members' Web site.

War and Peace

■ Immanuel Kant wrote that the natural state of man is war. Jesus Christ, however, wants us to learn the way of peace. What does it take to overcome our natural state and become peacemakers?

by Robert Berendt

A few years ago, a group of my family members and I searched for and found the gravesites of our ancestors in Gros Arnisdorf, East Prussia (now Jarnoltowek, Poland). One of the most interesting things we found during our trip was a sign posted on the outside of a brick wall that read "Immanuel Kant – 1754." The sign was of great interest to us, because five of us had studied some of Kant's work at university. The German Enlightenment philosopher apparently taught as a tutor in this house in his younger days.

Toward the end of his life, Kant wrote a large essay called "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch." In this work he made an astonishing statement.

He wrote: "The state of peace among men living side by side is not

the natural state; the natural state is one of war. This does not always mean open hostilities, but at least an unceasing threat of war." We can read history books and see an endless series of wars. A lasting peace among states does not seem to exist for long; they are either at war, resting from war or getting ready for war.

Kant's conclusion was remarkable, as it was written over 200 years ago and reflects the history of the world up until today.

A Natural State of War

Nations or states can develop good relationships, but all of that depends on who is in charge and what pressures or forces act on them. States want control and power. They seek wealth, honor and respect. They want a voice in the world. Ideologies develop that change people. For instance, Hitler taught his citizens that they were the "superior race." That changed the behavior of many people toward their neighbors. The death of a ruler, corruption that has been uncovered, propaganda, financial setbacks or threats from perceived enemies all impact states. Our newspapers are filled with accounts of events that have changed and shaped history.

Some religious leaders infuse the minds of their people with the belief

that they and only they have the truth and with it, a mandate from God to act on His behalf. Because of this, many have argued that more wars

It takes a great deal more courage and inner strength to become a peacemaker than it does to declare war.

have been fought over religion than almost any other cause.

Even if states have come to a time of peace, another generation will come along continuing the cycle of war. It seems we shuttle between war and peace in a constant motion. As George Santyana once wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Whether we speak of individuals, groups or states, the same thinking pattern rings true.

The Carnal Mind at Work

War is natural for states, but is this statement also true for individual people, families or tribes? Is the state of war indeed the natural state for man?

God tells us that we humans do not know the way of peace (Romans 3:17). That does not mean we do not seek peace or that many do not want peace. It only means that although we seek peace, other factors

prevent peace from happening and continuing.

James 4:1-3 was directed towards the members of the Body of Christ,

people who are converted and now striving to live Christ-like lives. Yet James asks: "Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."

If those who are dedicated to following Christ have issues with wars and fighting, should we wonder that it truly does apply to individuals, families, tribes and states?

Paul also noted the condition within the Church in Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 3:3 Paul wrote: "For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?"

Jesus Christ set the standard by His life and by His teachings. He told His followers that they were not to be like the rest of this world.

In a marriage relationship, so many aspects of life are shared that it should be considered the best chance for living in peace. Brothers and sisters, relatives or close friends can develop good relationships.

But things change, people change, and circumstances change. Those changes very often interfere with living side by side peacefully. On an individual basis, changing habits, lengthy separations, illness or frustrations can lead to a change in peaceful harmony. Jealousy, coveting what others have and a growing desire for power, respect, honor or wealth

all change a person. Those changes often cause division between the closest of friends. Many have witnessed family tensions when inheritances are not deemed to be "equal." Families can be torn apart.

Jesus' Standard of Peace

Jesus Christ gave a different mandate for behavior to mankind. His followers are to strive to live by His words. He said in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

It takes a great deal more courage and inner strength to become a peacemaker than it does to declare war. In marriage, a wise mate focused on maintaining peace will be alert to the times when his or her spouse is having a "bad day." He or she will realize that things like illnesses, headaches, toothaches, worry and fear can affect us all, and will be understanding to changes in mood or health. Peter admonishes us to have a fervent love for one another (1 Peter 4:8).

It is difficult for two people, two groups or two states to live together in peace. God also knows this and has declared that the Prince of Peace must come to take over the governments of this world—to order it and establish it (Isaiah 9:6-7). He and only He has the right, correct and perfectly just way of living. Every other way leads to the wars the world has experienced.

To end all wars, Christ will rule with all the strength and power necessary (Revelation 12:5). He will overcome the evil forces on this earth, and there will finally be a lasting and perpetual peace. The target will be justice for all—a goal that reaches into eternal life for all humans.

Meanwhile, let us all put every effort into the goal of extending the peace in our own lives and relationships until He comes. **UN**

Robert Berendt is pastor of the Edmonton, Alberta, congregation and a member of the Council of Elders.



How to Avoid Getting Angry With Your Child

■ Few relationships can produce more challenges and frustrations than the parent-child relationship. What can we do when love and anger collide in the family?

by Linda LaBissoniere

Megan stopped yelling in mid-sentence. Her 4-year-old child, Taylor, had placed his hands in front of his little face and his wide eyes showed sheer terror. Megan looked at her own face in the mirror that hung over the sofa and was shocked at what she saw. Her eyebrows were knit together and her teeth were showing from her open mouth. Her arms were held up, almost as if she were going to hit her son.

How could it have come to this? Why was she so angry with Taylor again? She loved him dearly and would never strike him in anger—yet he was terrified of her at that moment.

Have you ever felt as Megan did? Do you find yourself getting angry with your children much too often?

We may even feel that we are bad parents because of our angry feelings toward our children. We may wonder why some parents are able to keep their cool when their children misbehave.

In reality, every parent gets angry at times, and children can try even the best of parents. It even seems that they instinctively know how to “push our buttons.” But how can we minimize the times we get angry? Below are a few tips to help us accomplish this.

Understand Why You Get Angry

There are many possible reasons for anger. We may feel angry when our goals are blocked or when we feel inconvenienced and disrespect-

ed. Anger can often be caused by a mixture of feelings. These include feeling frustrated, disappointed, depressed, powerless, useless or stressed. After we become angry, it's important to take some time to analyze just why. Doing so can help us develop solutions to avoid becoming angry in the future.

In some cases anger is caused by what we say to ourselves about the actions of our children, not the actual actions. Perhaps it's time to think about whether we are really angry about our children's behavior or if it is our view of their behavior that causes us to feel angry. If we are able to change our view, we will be able to change our reactions.

For example, Megan is planning a dinner party and asks Taylor to pick up his toys in the living room. He begins the task, and Megan goes back to the kitchen to prepare dinner. Five minutes before her guests are to arrive she finds that Taylor has not picked up his toys, and has actually created an even bigger mess. She gets angry and yells at her son.

Part of the reason she got angry is that her child's behavior blocked her goal of having a clean house. She also became frustrated and emotionally began thinking that her son did this to hurt her. Logically, she knows that her child does not intentionally plan to hurt her.

At age 4, Taylor is simply forgetful and easily distracted. In the past Megan has had to remind him to stay focused on picking up his toys. So in reality, it was her emotionally charged view of her child's actions that caused her to feel anger, not his actual actions. (For information on how to apply loving discipline, see the chapter “Bringing Up a Moral Child” and the sidebars “Discipline With Encouragement” and “The Value of Consequences” in the booklet *Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension*.)

In some cases, our anger issues may be much larger than the situ-

ation described above. We may be angry with someone else and then transfer it to our children. Perhaps we are depressed or are battling issues that have caused much anger inside us. In these cases we may need to seek professional help in order to deal with the underlying reasons. We may also want to

In reality, every parent gets angry at times, and children can try even the best of parents. It even seems that they instinctively know how to “push our buttons.”

consider getting a medical checkup since certain physical conditions can contribute to feelings of anger.

Take Responsibility for Your Emotions

It is important to realize how destructive it is for a child to live in a home where outbursts of anger are common. Numerous studies have demonstrated these ill effects. Even the Bible describes the effects of anger. Psalm 37:8 states, “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it only causes harm.”

Not only does anger cause harm, it also gives your children a poor example. Our children are learning from us all the time. How we deal with frustrating circumstances teaches our children how to handle similar events. If we learn to be slow to anger and to express our anger in appropriate ways, our children will in time learn to do the same.

First and foremost, realize that it is our responsibility to gain control over our emotions. Some parents erroneously blame their angry outbursts solely on the actions of their children. In a sense they look at themselves as victims.

Instead they should be focusing on minimizing the times that they actually become angry by discovering their anger “triggers” and learning what actions to take to avoid an “explosion” of anger. These actions

could involve correcting underlying reasons for anger, a parental or child “time-out” or stress-reducing activities such as walking or breathing deeply. It may also be helpful to anticipate situations that could cause us to become angry so we can work out in advance how we are going to react.

Understand What to Expect From Your Child's Age

Parents can feel anger toward their children because they have unrealistic expectations regarding their behavior. For example, one may take it personally when one's baby cries too much. But babies cry. We must understand that they do not do it to upset us, but it is their way of communicating.

Toddlers find it very difficult to sit still or focus very long. Are we expecting them to sit quietly by our side as we watch a sporting event or movie? At times, they will say “no” or even throw a tantrum. While these actions must be addressed, we should not allow ourselves to become angry.

Five-year-olds are forgetful and sometimes don't remember to do what we ask them to do (though loving discipline can help them learn to be obedient more often). But we must resist the impulse to feel disrespected. Most siblings will argue with each other. Instead of allowing this to anger us, we should focus on teaching them how to get along.

The best way to understand what to expect from a child your child's age is to learn more about child development. There are many books written on this subject available at bookstores and libraries, as well as hundreds of Web sites such as www.parentcenter.com. When



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we learn the expected behaviors for our children, we are less likely to get angry and overreact to their behavior.

Ask God to Help You With Your Feelings of Anger

We may find it difficult to change how we feel. Changing our way of thinking and acting is very hard to do on our own. It requires going to God in prayer and asking Him to help us make any needed changes. Philippians 4:13 states, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

God tells us the importance of controlling our emotions. Proverbs 16:32 states, “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.” To be effective parents, we must learn to control our emotions. Following the above steps will help us to achieve this goal. **UN**

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Related Online Sources

Even the most loving parents will experience anger every now and then toward their children. However, uncontrolled anger can affect our ability to make good decisions as well as maintain a positive relationship with our sons or daughters. Here are some resources that can help us to manage our anger:

www.ucg.org/bible-faq/anger-management.htm

How can I manage my anger? What can I do to overcome a temper problem? Being angry to the point of sin comes naturally to us, but God offers help in our anger management struggle.

www.verticalthought.org/qa/anger.htm

How should I answer someone who makes me mad? How can I have anger control?

www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/FM/discipline.asp

“Discipline With Encouragement” from the booklet *Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension*.

How could discipline possibly be encouraging? Isn't it always painful and depressing? The answer is no, discipline need not always be that way. Here's why.



Local Church Updates

Country Fair Comes to Los Angeles

In early August, the Los Angeles and Bakersfield, California, congregations joined together to enjoy an old time country fair. It was a day full of events for young and old alike.

Fellowship kicked off with a country-style picnic that was quickly followed by challenging midway games and prizes, watermelon-eating contests, sack races, and arts and crafts for the kids. Running concurrently with the fun and festivities was an area set up for members to display their talents in art, crafts and hobbies.



Grand Poo-bah
Brandon Wlasoff

No country fair would be complete without a friendly competition for honors in the art of pie and chili making. Estela Gonzalez (Los Angeles) took first place for her sumptuous peach pie, and Mike Carter (Bakersfield) took first for his delicious chili. A special award was also bestowed upon the one individual who was able to master all the midway games. The "Grand Poo-bah" award went to Brandon Wlasoff, age 13, of Los Angeles.

The day wrapped up with a potluck, where everyone was able to enjoy all the contestants' chili and pie submissions, a variety show filled with music, singing and "extreme" juggling, followed by the final event of the day, a country dance—to work off all that chili, pie and watermelon eatin', of course!

Lori Anderson

Volunteers Bring Joy and Breakfast to Ronald McDonald House

On Nov. 30, the Colorado Front Range churches participated for a second time in cooking a meal for the



Children erupt in laughter as they play tug-of-war, one of many games at the country fair (photos by Lori Anderson)

residents of the local Ronald McDonald House in Denver. The people who are staying there are parents of children with severe illnesses or parents of premature babies in surrounding hospitals in Denver. Ronald McDonald House encourages local groups to

come in and donate a meal, which includes buying, preparing and serving the food to the residents.

It was a very worthwhile project, and our young people in the Church who participated were able to count this activity as part of their charitable work requirements for graduation. The first time we volunteered, we cooked a tostada dinner, which really went over great! On the Sunday morning after Thanksgiving, we did a waffle breakfast.

We are also collecting aluminum tabs off cans for the Ronald McDonald House's ongoing recycling fundraiser. Church members bring them to services, and then we donate them in Denver.

Many major cities have Ronald McDonald Houses built near major hospitals, and Denver now has two of them. They have Web sites for locations and more information. The services they provide for these people are amazing. It is a very rewarding experience to see the appreciation in the faces of those who are experiencing severe trials in their lives and in the lives of their children and grandchildren.

One woman and her family were there from Nebraska. She had premature triplets and two had died. She is staying in Denver to be near her sur-

living baby. Her husband travels to and from their farm in Nebraska to be with his wife and brings their older son to see his mom. They can all stay at the Ronald McDonald House and be close to the hospital.

Sharon Dominguez

Hand Puppets Help Teach Sabbath School Children

Barbara Scheper, who volunteers locally and teaches piano, got the idea to revamp Sabbath school in the Oshkosh, Wisconsin, congregation. While other volunteers teach the teen Sabbath school, Barbara teaches the



Barbara Scheper
(photo by John Illgen)

children with the aid of hand puppets. She became interested in using puppets as a teaching model after learning about the idea from one of her adult piano students.

She sought assistance in making the hand puppet stage from her daughter, Linda, and son-in-law, Ken Michler. They took on the construction of the stage very willingly as a labor of love and in one week presented it to Barbara. The stage has a variety of interchangeable backgrounds made from poster board, construction paper and other materials, which she is able to individualize for each lesson.

Melodie Illgen, also of the Oshkosh congregation, offered to help by making some hand puppets, a boy and girl that can be altered with different outfits for different lessons. Stuffed animals and other puppets purchased at secondhand stores round out the cast of characters.

The children love to use the puppets when learning the stories from

the Bible. Sometimes, Barbara also uses a standing flannel board with colored silhouettes to teach parts of the lessons. "I try to keep the children involved with active learning, and they really love it!" she said. "I hope there will be others who will take this approach and enjoy teaching their [congregations'] young children as much as I do."

Melodie Illgen

Dayton Ladies' Fellowship Group Attends Retreat

As a means of deepening relationships between women in the Church, the Dayton, Ohio, congregation has



Dayton ladies at their Kentucky retreat (photo by Jennifer Foster)

formed the Dayton Ladies' Fellowship Group. The ladies in Dayton have been meeting for two years and had their third annual Ladies' Tea this January to start off year three.

The group meets five to six times per year. The meetings range from special presentations to group discussions to service projects, such as Feast baskets for those unable to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. But what the group really achieves during the meetings is deeper understanding, respect and love for each fellow sister in Christ.

These results were multiplied exponentially when the ladies were able to attend a weekend retreat this past November in Kentucky. The theme of the retreat was "Thankfulness, Appreciation and Gratitude." It was such a success that the group hopes to make it an annual tradition and be able to extend an invitation in the future to ladies in other congregations.

The group meetings are planned by a support panel of five Dayton ladies. The panel members have had great success and enjoyment in planning the meetings and creating opportunities for the Dayton ladies to grow close. They hope other congregations will feel inspired to create similar opportunities for their ladies.

Jennifer Foster

Men's Chili Cook-Off Kicks Cincinnati Up a Notch

Once a year the men from the Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregation give the ladies a break from supplying food at a potluck. There is only one catch; the only food made for this potluck is chili.

The Men's Chili Cook-Off is held in January, followed by karaoke after sundown, and is another way for families and brethren to get together and have a nice meal. This year it was held on Saturday, Jan. 10, at the home office.

Barb Fouch, of the Cincinnati East social committee, said the committee tries to have something for everyone.

Ina McLemore reflected that it was

more than just a family atmosphere. "Everyone pitches in. If they see something that needs to be done they do it. Young and old alike," she said.

There were two categories for the Men's Chili Cook-Off challenge: hot chili and mild chili. The winners for the hot chili category were Reuben Boise in first place, Zack Fenger in second and Brett Harris in third.

For the mild chili category the winners were Robert Stephens in first place, Mike Phelps in second and Mike Bennett in third.

Dana Zannetti, one of the judges, was very pleased with the event. She said, "It was a success as usual. Good food and good fellowship."

Linda Merrick



Volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House (photo by Heather Quick)

Local Church Updates: If your congregation's news and events are rarely covered in *United News*, why not check with your pastor and write something for him to send in? We're looking for 100- to 300-word articles and photographs with captions. Please include a self-addressed envelope if you would like photos returned. Include the author's and photographer's names and your phone number. Please double-check the spelling of names. Please e-mail (preferred) or give the material to your local pastor to forward to *United News*.

Announcements

Births

Harold and Tonya Compton of the Flint, Michigan, congregation are thrilled to announce the birth of their



Brooklyn Nicole Compton

third child, Brooklyn Nicole, born on Sept. 8, 2008. Brooklyn weighed 6 pounds 15 ounces and was 20½ inches long. Proud grandparents are Jim and Linda Lapp of the Flint congregation, Harold and Pamela Compton of Hohenwald, Tennessee, and Meredith and Betty Reschly of Linden, Michigan. Harold and Tonya's older children Chelsi (20) and Bret (15) are elated to have a new baby sister. Brooklyn is a long-awaited answered prayer and is truly a blessing to the family and a precious gift from God.

Troy and Cindy Phelps, along with big sister Cadence, would like to announce the birth of Ciara Michael Phelps. Ciara was born one day early on June 14, 2008—the day before



Ciara Michael Phelps

Father's Day! She weighed 8 pounds and was 20 inches long. She is a very pleasant baby and a wonderful addition to our family! Thank you for sharing in our joy. Grandparents are John and Merrie Elliott of Phoenix, Arizona, East and Floyd and Doris Phelps of Cincinnati, Ohio, East.

Clint and Joy Porter of the Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregation announce the birth of their second child, David John, born on Dec. 1, 2008. David weighed 7 pounds 14 ounces and was 21.75 inches long. He was welcomed by proud grandparents David and Luella Porter of Indianapolis, Indiana, and John and



David John Porter

Linda LaBissoniere of Knoxville, Tennessee, and big sister Melody Ruth.

Engagements

Dirk and Kathleen Trone of Somers, California, are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Kari Kathleen Trone, to Kenneth John Blanchard of Carson



Kari Trone and Ken Blanchard

City, Nevada, formerly of McMillan, Michigan, son of John and Linda Blanchard of McMillan, Michigan. Ken and Kari met at the Feast of Tabernacles in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in 2007. They currently split their time attending the Sacramento, California, and Reno, Nevada, congregations and are planning a spring wedding in the Lake Tahoe area.

Weddings

Thomas and Jerry Johnsey of the Birmingham, Alabama, congrega-



Rebecca and Dan Carreiro

tion are excited to announce the marriage of their daughter, Rebecca Diane to Dan Carreiro, son of Antonio and Edie Carreiro of the West Palm Beach, Florida, congregation. The wedding took place at the beautiful Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham, Alabama, on June 1, 2008. The ceremony was performed by Bruce Gore. The bride's attendants included sister Amy Gilmer, longtime friends Karen Claunch and Elaina Parsley, and nieces Dakota Johnsey and Makenzie Kobernat. The groom's attendants included longtime friends Matthew Jenkins, Andrew Jenkins, Phillip Blake, Stuart Haymond and Brendan Moore. The flower girl was niece Brooklyn Brandt and the ring bearer was nephew Tyler Kobernat. The couple honeymooned in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and now happily resides in Port Saint Lucie, Florida, with their dog, Presley.

Jennifer Pennington and Micah Disman exchanged marriage vows at the Westerville Community Center in Westerville, Ohio, on Aug. 3, 2008. Jennifer is the daughter of Harold and Louise Pennington, members of the Columbus, Ohio, congregation, and Micah is the son of Ron and Grace Disman, members of the



Micah and Jennifer Disman

Akron, Ohio, congregation. Randy Stiver, pastor of the Columbus, Ohio, congregation, performed the wedding ceremony. The bride's sisters, Rachel Pennington and Ann Power, served as the maid and matron of honor, and the bridesmaids were Beth Isaac, Rita Crane and Lena VanAusdle. The groom's nephew, Matthew Hernandez, served as best man and the groomsmen were Dan Connell, Brandon Schulz, Neil Crane and Lewis VanAusdle. The couple lives in Columbus, Ohio, and attend the Columbus congregation.

Anniversaries

Tom and Jody Adams, current students at the Ambassador Bible Center, celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on the evening of Dec. 27, 2008, in Smithfield, North Carolina, in the very elegantly decorated banquet room of the Sleep Inn Hotel.



Tom and Jody Adams

The event was attended by about 70 of their friends and family, and was hosted by three of their daughters, Jane Owens, Melanie Ellison, and Jennifer Gales. After Jack Williford asked a blessing, dinner was served, which was catered by Olive Garden.

After dinner Tom and Jody shared comments and memories with each other, family members and friends. Special guests included Richard and Dawn Radford of Florida, who introduced Tom and Jody to each other on Pentecost of 1983. Tom and Jody then cut the three-tiered anniversary cake, which was passed to guests by grandsons Will and Zach.

In addition to friends, Tom and Jody shared this event with three daughters, one of Jody's sisters, Tom's brother, two sons-in-law and four grandchildren.

On Jan. 7, their actual anniversary date, the 2009 ABC class also presented Jody and Tom with two cakes and a gift of a beautifully framed poem.

Edward and Dolores Bock of the Elmira, New York, congregation happily celebrated their 60th wed-



Dolores and Edward Bock

ding anniversary on May 8, 2008.

On the Sabbath of May 10, their local congregation honored them with a card and cake after services. After the presentation, Dolores read a poem that she felt reflected their blessings.

Mr. and Mrs. Bock have five children, nine grandchildren and two great-granddaughters.

Ed and Dolores are the parents of Georgianna Borgna and Donna Buchholz, who are also members of the Elmira congregation.

Obituaries

Mike Anderson, age 54, a baptized member of the Laurel, Mississippi, congregation, died at his home in Baxterville, Mississippi, during the Feast of Tabernacles on Oct. 17, 2008, from inoperable brain cancer. He was diagnosed with the condition in November 2007. As his condition worsened, Mike's peace of mind coupled with his willingness to place his life in God's hands inspired those around him. His wife, Beth, and son, Aaron, also baptized members who attend in Laurel, faithfully cared for Mike and were at his side until his death.



Mike Anderson

The Andersons often spoke of the tremendous lift they received from brethren around the world who sent cards of encouragement during his illness.

Mike owned three businesses: Salt of the Earth Enterprises, Anderson Porcelain Repair and Anderson Sand and Gravel. Besides Beth and Aaron, Mike is survived by his daughter, Amy Haring; stepson, Jon Cabaniss; parents, Lee and Kathryn Anderson; six sisters, Ann Mackie, Sue Hudson, Gail Parker, Janet Boler, Tammy Bond and Joan Bounds; and a brother, Charles Anderson. The funeral was conducted on Oct. 19 by Andy Burnett, pastor of the Laurel, Mississippi, and New Orleans, Louisiana, congregations.

Frank Arlen Bickford, 73, died of a heart attack on Oct. 8, 2008. He was born on Oct. 31, 1934. He is survived by his wife, Charlotte. Both he and



Frank Bickford

his wife had been members of God's Church since 1987 and attended the Bangor, Maine, congregation. Frank served by copying tapes for the Church.

Frank had many handicaps and had been confined to a wheelchair since 1993. He played guitar and harmonica. After he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 1997, Frank could no longer copy tapes at Church and forgot how to play his instruments. He started making birdhouses. When he could not do that any longer, Frank started painting. He listened to sermon tapes over and over. He was afflicted with diabetes, heart disease and a form of multiple sclerosis. Frank loved to go fishing, camping and walking in the woods to be near God and His creation. One of his final wishes was to get up from his wheelchair and really take a walk in the woods.

He was such a sweet and gentle soul. He loved his nine children, 23 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Nov. 11, 2008, in Bangor where Frank and Charlotte resided. Their pastor, Paul Suckling, presided over the service.

Frank is forever missed, but it is exciting to know that in the twinkling of an eye Frank will be changed and be in the Kingdom of God forever.

Don Clark, 74, of Sacramento, California, died Dec. 11, 2008, due to complications from diabetes and heart disease. Originally from Canada, Don came into the Church



Don Clark

in 1968 in Regina, Saskatchewan, and was a member of the Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta, congregations until moving to California in 1987. He first heard the broadcast in 1967 from a radio station in Great Falls, Montana.

He is survived by his wife, Eileen; two daughters, Carolyn Scharpen (and her husband, Scott) and Kelly Ann Conner (and her husband, Dylan); a son, David (and his wife, Valerie); a stepson, Richard Norton (and his wife, Cheryl); and seven grandchildren.

Veronica Galiatsatos, 92, wife of the late Omerus Galiatsatos, died Dec. 5, 2008, in hospice in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She was born in Romania in 1916.

After completing her education, Mrs. Galiatsatos married, and she and her husband moved to Greece.



Veronica Galiatsatos

In 1954, they immigrated to the United States, settling in the Boston, Massachusetts, area. She enjoyed working a number of years at Massachusetts General Hospital. She was also well known by family and friends for her culinary skills.

Mrs. Galiatsatos is survived by a son, Fred Galiatsatos; eight grandchildren, Richard, Tina, James, Michelle, Demetrios, Lisa, Sarah and Nicholas; nine great-grandchildren; many nieces and nephews; and her extended family in Canada and Romania. She will be greatly missed by her great-granddaughters, Julie and Jennilee, who were very close to her in the last years of her life.

She was preceded in death by her husband; a son, Jim Galiatsatos; a brother-in-law, George Galiatsatos, and his wife, Petrina; and a granddaughter, Tash.

The funeral was conducted by Martin Cole, an elder in the Worcester, Massachusetts, congregation on Dec. 14 in Salem, Massachusetts.

She was a longtime member of God's Church. In 1998, after the death of her husband and one of her sons, she moved to Dania, Florida, where she continued to remain active in the Church.

Her faith in God strengthened her during difficult periods of her life. In later years, she labored to attend church services each week with a walker and finally in a wheelchair. She will be remembered for her faith in God and for her tenacity in the face of difficulty.

Mark Vreeland of Ann Arbor, Michigan, lost his physical battle with cancer on Oct. 11, 2008, at the



Mark Vreeland

Tribute: Charles "Chuck" Eugene Bailey

Charles Eugene Bailey, 78, died in his sleep at his home in Sparta, Michigan, on Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2008.

He was born in Central Lake, Michigan, on April 17, 1930, to Percival and Virginia (Apsely) Bailey. He had a brother, Barry Bailey, and a sister, Diane Hammer. He married Mildred Nyhoff on Feb. 9, 1950. They had five children, Shallimar (Shally) Jane, Darrel Lee, Linda Kay, Kirk Allen and Rebecca Ann. Due to illnesses in his childhood, Chuck never graduated from high school and eventually had to have both of his legs amputated below the knee while in his 20s.

Instead of taking disability payments from the state of Michigan, he persuaded the state to pay for his college education if he could pass the entrance exam. He studied for almost a year, took the exam and scored third out of 300 students who took the exam. He graduated from Ferris State College with a mechanical engineering degree.

age of 45. He was a deacon in the Church and faithfully looked forward to God's Kingdom. He will be sorely missed by his family, friends and Church family, but we will see him again!

He is survived by his wife, Connie, and two children, Mark Andrew II and Rachel Laurié. He is also survived by his parents, Tom and Pam Vreeland, and two sisters, Kristin Dishaw and Sarah (Mike) Hauck. He had several nieces and nephews: Anna, John, Michael, Rebecca, Pamela, Joshua, Katie and David.

Mark served at several youth camps including Buckeye Preteen Camp, Winter Camp and Ironwood Springs, Minnesota, Preteen Camp. He had a love for the Church youth and directed the teen club that encompassed three church areas.

Ruth Ann Cleveland, 58, died Oct. 29, 2008, after a 2½-year battle with breast cancer.

She was a member in the Coleman, Texas, congregation where she attended with her husband, Larry, a deacon. She is also survived by her daughter, Jean Stewart, son-in-law Scott Stewart, and three grandchildren, Ian, Julia and Hayden. She is also survived by a niece, Susan Horst, of the St. Louis, Missouri, congregation.

Ruth Ann started attending the Church in the early 1970s and was baptized in St. Louis in 1973. She attended congregations in St. Louis, Missouri; Period, Illinois; Akron, Ohio; Canton, Ohio; Midland/Odessa, Texas; Fort Worth, Texas; Houston, Texas; Waco, Texas; and Abilene, Texas. She was one of the founding members of the UCG Coleman congregation in 1995.

Ruth Ann appreciated all of the many cards and letters she received from the brethren around the world

Chuck was a very industrious man, starting and running his own engineering business in Texas. He then moved back to Michigan where he was employed by and later retired from Herman Miller Corp., makers of office furniture in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He helped design office chairs and was awarded a patent for one of his designs.

Chuck would always find something to keep himself busy until he had back surgery in 2003 and again in 2005. He never fully recovered from the surgery and suffered a stroke in 2006. He always looked to God for help and strength, especially during the long health trial.

Chuck was baptized in May of 1965 in Grand Rapids by Frank McCrady. He was ordained a deacon at the Feast of Trumpets in 1972 and widowed on May 25, 1985. He married Sharon Schwarz on Nov. 21, 1987, and was ordained an elder in Grand Rapids on Pentecost in 1999. Mr. Bailey was very active in the Church and enjoyed hunting, fishing, woodworking and camping. He was preceded in death by his wife



Chuck Bailey

Mildred, his brother Barry, and his granddaughter Georgia. He is survived by his second wife Sharon, his sister Diane, five children, five stepchildren, 20 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, and nephews and nieces.

Chuck never knew the word "quit." He just never gave up. His long trials are now over and he awaits the wake-up call of our Savior. He will be greatly missed.



Ruth Ann Cleveland

during her illness. She kept all of her cards and would reread them from time to time. The cards inspired her to write to others who were suffering and facing various trials. Serving her family and Church members were the two most important activities in her life after studying God's Word. Even though she was unable to attend the Feast of Tabernacles this year, she listened and watched it on the Internet. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

Marcus L. Smith, better known to most people as "Lamar," passed



Marcus L. Smith

away at the age of 83. He had survived the Depression, World War II, the Korean War, car crashes and cancer. Mary Jane Smith, his wife of 53 years, preceded Mr. Smith in death. He is survived by his son, Gary Smith; daughter, Maryln (Mrs. Jim Harbaugh); five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; four brothers; and five sisters.

Mr. Smith was a masonry contractor for 50 years and built many structures in South Texas. It was nearly impossible to drive anywhere with Mr. Smith without him pointing out something he had a hand in building.

He mentored and gave a start to many novice bricklayers. Over the years, Lamar hired friends and family to work for his masonry company, giving them jobs when they had none. One young man wrote Mr. Smith a letter thanking him for giving him a chance and a job. He said, "My life has changed. I am now drug-free and going to college. I owe it all to you."

Mr. Smith's mother was a longtime member of the Worldwide Church of God, and his younger brother, Carlton, served for many years as a church pastor. In 1966 Lamar and Jane Smith began reading the Church's literature, and they were baptized in February 1967. Lamar and Jane served together as deacon and deaconess in the Corpus Christi congregation for 30 years. They are greatly missed.

Announcements: Members are welcome to submit announcements of the births, engagements, weddings, significant anniversaries (25, 40, 50, 60, etc.) and obituaries in their families. Please include a self-addressed envelope if you would like photos returned. Most items are 50 to 100 words and should not exceed 250 words. Please **e-mail (preferred) or give them to your local pastor** to forward to *United News*.

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

that provided a peak experience for 473 campers.

Listed here are the camps scheduled for 2009:

Houston Preteen, Montgomery, Texas, June 7 to 10.

Condor, Bakersfield, California, June 22 to 25.

Lewistown Preteen, Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania, June 28 to July 1.

Northwest Preteen, Sisters, Oregon, June 28 to July 1.

U-Can-Do, Indianapolis, Indiana, July 7 to 9.

Tomahawk, Eva, Tennessee, July 19 to 23.

Osage, Pawhuska, Oklahoma, July 20 to 23.

Buckeye, Beach City, Ohio, July 26 to 29.

Ironwood Springs, Rochester, Minnesota, July 26 to 29.

You'll find contact information for each camp in the spring in our *United Youth Camps Magazine* and on the members' Web site. We truly appreciate all the work that goes into making this such a successful and positive program for our children.

Dave Register

Personal Correspondence Update

In November 2008, the Personal Correspondence Department answered 171 letters/e-mails. Sixty-two were surface mail letters; 85 were personal correspondence e-mails; 24 were *Vertical Thought* e-mails.

Illustrating the wide range of our subscriber base, we had letters from a subscriber in Qatar, asking about the fall of man, and from an Israeli subscriber, asking about the United Church of God's stand on Zionism.

Several questions were generated by the recently published series on the rapture in *World News and Prophecy*. *Beyond Today* TV programs inspired

some letters on the Sabbath, the divinity of Christ and a request for DVDs.

Cecil Maranville

Southeastern Regional Prom, March 7

The Atlanta, Georgia, and surrounding congregations will be hosting the 10th annual Southeastern Regional Prom on the evening of March 7, 2009, in the Grand Ballroom of the Gainesville Civic Center in Gainesville, Georgia. This year's theme is "A Night on the Town."

Sabbath services will be held in the same hall beginning at 2:30 p.m. followed by the formal/semiformal dance for those aged 13 through young adult. The dance starts around 8 p.m. Parents are welcome to attend the dance as well. Light snacks, a dessert buffet and beverages will be available.

Discounted tickets are available in advance at \$20 per person with a maximum charge of \$40 per family. Reservations are requested by Feb. 27 to help with the planning. Please send payment to Robert McCurdy, 368 Shadow Brooke Circle, Loganville, GA 30052. Make checks payable to UCG—Atlanta.

Additional information about motels, seminars, senior recognition and directions will be available on the Web at www.ucgatanta.org, or call Bruce Gore at (678) 376-0543.

Wooster Regional Family Day, March 14

The Canton, Ohio, congregation, in conjunction with other northeast Ohio congregations, will be hosting the Fourth Annual Wooster Regional Family Day on March 14.

The day and evening will be packed with Bible seminars, Sabbath services, good food, a LifeNets fund-raiser, team sports, a family fun fair, a movie and lots of fellowship. It will all take place indoors at the beautiful Wooster, Ohio, High School. Find more details at www.ucg-cleveland.org under "Announcements."

Chris Moen



What's New on the Web?

■ New Daily Video GN Commentary.

Watch new video commentaries posted to ucg.org, the GN magazine site and YouTube. Some recent topics include:

"Smoking," "End of the World," "Five Living Presidents," "Pardon Me?" "Is Abstinence Education the Answer?" "Israel Retaliates Against Hamas," "Arab-Israeli Conflict," "We Regret to Inform You," "A Hand Full of Empty," "Cheap Gasoline—Is It Worth It?"

www.gnmagazine.org



■ World News and Prophecy on Facebook

Join the *World News and Prophecy* Facebook group to read recent news, comment on posted items and discuss articles with other WNP readers. Be sure to type "World News & Prophecy" in the search box.

Featured Link

■ **World News and Prophecy** on Twitter.
twitter.com/wnponline

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



Dallas Eighth Annual Teen Formal, March 28-29

Once again, the Dallas congregation is happy to announce the details for the 2009 UCG Regional Teen Formal! This year, the very special evening will be held at the Southfork Hotel in Plano, Texas, on Saturday evening, March 28.

We look forward to seeing all of our teens dressed to the nines! A wonderful dinner, music and dancing, with a special tribute to all of our graduating seniors, will highlight this special night! Registration deadline is March 13. We look forward to seeing all of you teens at this very special annual event in the Dallas area! To register, go to www.ucg-dallas.org/teenformal.

Doug Horchak

Calendar of Events

Feb. 24-26: Council of Elders meetings, Cincinnati, Ohio.

March 7: Southeastern Regional Prom, Atlanta, Georgia.

March 14: Wooster, Ohio, Regional Family Day.

March 14-15: Phoenix, Arizona, Women's Weekend, ucgazww@hotmail.com.

March 20-22: Families for God Weekend, Minneapolis, Minnesota, dsmorker@yahoo.com.

April 5-16: Israel Educational Spring Holy Day Tour, (800) 858-6999.

April 8: Passover (service previous evening).

April 9-15: Days of Unleavened Bread.

May 3-4: General Conference of Elders annual meeting.

May 31: Pentecost.

June 25-July 2: Camp Pinecrest, Missouri.

June 28-July 5: Camp Woodmen, Alabama.

July 4: Akron, Ohio, 50th anniversary (www.ucgakron.org).

July 5-12: Camp Carter, Texas.

July 5-12: Camp Hye Sierra, California.

Aug. 2-9: Camp Davidson, Oregon.

Aug. 9-16: Camp Heritage, Pennsylvania.

Video Production Job Posted

Larry Salyer, media operation manager, has announced an opening for a position in video production.

Position duties will include shooting and editing video, mixing audio, archiving and duplicating media, and assisting in the maintenance and troubleshooting of video production equipment.

A bachelor's degree related to television production is preferred or an equivalent combination of education and experience in television production, basic cinematography, production planning, video editing, sound acquisition and mixing, camera operation and lighting. A working knowledge of video and audio production equipment is required.

Strong logic, language and communication skills required. Those applying for consideration should supply samples of their work.

Potential employees must be baptized members of the United Church of God. Applicants must be biblically literate and possess a thorough working knowledge of the doctrines, beliefs and practices of the United Church of God. The deadline for submission of an application is March 13, 2009. For more information about the position, please contact human_resources@ucg.org.

Families for God Weekend Twin Cities, March 20-22

"Building Godly Character—Doing the Hard Things" is the theme for the 12th Annual Families for God Weekend in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Sponsored by the Twin Cities congregations, the event will be held the weekend of March 20-22, 2009.

Dave Register, UCG director of Education Programs, will join us as the weekend guest speaker. This year will feature a Friday evening Bible study. Sabbath activities will include services followed by informative seminars, a catered dinner, teen prom and variety show. Special activities are planned for children aged 2 to 11 during the seminars. Sunday recreational activities for the whole family are also planned.

For details and to register, please visit www.ucgmpls.org/ffg2009, or contact David Morker at dsmorker@yahoo.com or (763) 639-8705.

Manya Kalamaha



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at Milford, Ohio, and at
additional mailing offices