



News At a Glance

Regional Pastors Meet for Annual Conference

Ten U.S. regional pastors, the Ministerial Services Team and other personnel who work with them met Nov. 9 to 11 in Cincinnati for a three-day conference.

The focus of this year's conference was on teamwork and godly leadership. Ministerial Services operation manager Jim Franks opened the conference with a presentation about creating a successful team even when new people are added. President Clyde Kilough followed with an overview of godly leadership and how these principles apply to the regional pastors.

Roy Holladay, chairman of the Council of Elders, gave a presentation covering basic principles of leadership and the need to work together to achieve success. He and Victor Kubik, chairman of the Council's Ethics Committee, were attending the conference as representatives of the Council of Elders.

Updates were presented by Richard Pinelli, director of Ministerial Development; Jason Lovelady, treasurer; and Larry Salyer, operation manager of Media and Communication Services. Britton Taylor, pastor of the Fort Worth and Coleman, Texas, congregations who serves as the coordinator of our retirement program, reviewed the retirement policies that were recently approved by the Council of Elders.

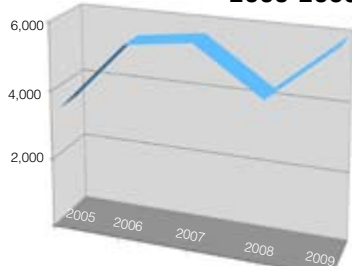
On Nov. 11 regional pastors individually met with the Ministerial Services Team and the president to discuss their regions and to take the first step in their job reviews. The human resources team has been conducting job reviews for all U.S. employees.

Paul and Jane Suckling have been on the regional pastor team since 1997. Mr. Suckling has recently accepted the responsibility of being the senior pastor for the United Kingdom and will step

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United Statistics

Bible Study Course Graduates 2005-2009



1,513,455 lessons mailed from the home office since 2000.
72,673 U.S. students have received all 12 lessons

Workshop Researches UCG Brand Essence



BRAND ESSENCE EXERCISES, such as this picture metaphor association one, focused on isolating important attributes of the United Church of God. Pictured here are (left to right) Darris McNeely, Northlich advisor Jerry Rushing, Philip Aust, Jennifer Gosse, Roy Holladay, Clint Porter and Peter Eddington.

by Elizabeth Cannon

A group of 22 Church administrators, staff, pastors and members met with the brand engagement agency Northlich, Inc., on Nov. 18 as part of the brand essence development project for the United Church of God.

The meeting began with opening remarks and prayer given by President Clyde Kilough. Afterwards, Brian Shaw, assistant pastor of the Chicago, Illinois, congregation and project manager of the Church's Branding Task Force, followed with a descrip-

tion of the day's agenda and focus points for the workshop.

Mr. Shaw said the purpose was "to gain a clearer understanding of our critical essence" so the Church can "better distinguish the message of the true gospel and the persona of the Church amidst all the religious clutter we face today."

He went on to explain, "Critical essence, or brand essence, is a clear articulation of the heart and soul of an organization—its fundamental nature or quality. Typically expressed in two to three words or a phrase, a company's

critical essence becomes the one prevailing constant across all product categories in all markets. It sets all boundaries and guides all initiatives, integrating and unifying all communications, every business practice and all representatives of the organization.

"Today we begin the process of boiling down the critical essence of the United Church of God, so we can express who we are and the message God has assigned us to deliver with crisp, vivid meaning, both internally and externally."

See "Branding," page 7

Student Council Chosen for ABC 2010

by David Register

After the first two months of ABC, the students are settled in and hard at work in the classroom.

On Oct. 29 the new student officers were announced:

- Student body president: Matthew Miller.
 - Social activities coordinator: David Archer.
 - Service projects coordinator: Caleb Creech.
 - Kitchen coordinator: Anna Helderbrand.
 - Message board coordinator: Valarie Serpa.
 - ABC Times editor: Whitney Smith.
 - Music coordinator: Mitch Moss.
 - Technical coordinator: Zach Zimmerman.
- Matt Miller then chose Megan

Brown to serve as secretary, Josh Lee as treasurer and Joe Gannon as class monitor.

Many of the other students will serve on the various committees, and every student is involved in

extracurricular activities ranging from kitchen duty to chorale.

We are very pleased with this year's class and the leadership skills they have demonstrated in planning activities so far this year. **UN**



(Standing) Whitney Smith, Mitch Moss, David Archer, Zach Zimmerman, Joe Gannon, Caleb Creech, Anna Helderbrand; (sitting) Megan Brown, Josh Lee, Matthew Miller, Valarie Serpa

Attendee Survey Asks for Full Participation

■ Everyone who attends United Church of God Sabbath services is invited to provide input on UCG programs and services between Dec. 12, 2009, and Jan. 10, 2010, at members.ucg.org.

by Dave Register and Julie Zutz

Two years ago the United Church of God conducted an anonymous survey of church attendees. The results of that survey were extremely helpful! The information from that is now a benchmark for measuring the progress of our programs.

This December and January we will be conducting the survey again so we can compare the results with the statistics from the first survey. We want to be sensitive to your input and continue to solicit your suggestions on what we are doing well and areas where you feel we may need improvement.

The first survey provided a large amount of data and comments. For example, over 35,000 comments were received

See "Survey," page 7

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down from being a U.S. regional pastor. He and his wife were presented with a plaque and gift certificate for their many years of service. They will be greatly missed.

David Evans

Camp Directors Plan 2010 Program

The United Youth Camps team held their 11th annual camp conference at the home office Oct. 26 to 28.

President Clyde Kilough welcomed the team and expressed his appreciation for the professionalism and sense of teamwork exhibited by the team in our camp programs. Following the opening remarks, the team analyzed the results of this year's surveys in a discussion with Education Programs director David Register.

During the conference the team heard updates from each of the UYC teen camp directors, the two Challenger II program directors and overall preteen camp coordinator Dave Myers to round out the full spectrum of camps sponsored by UCG in the United States.

Each year the team meets to discuss the camp programs for the current year, to discuss any problems or trends that emerge from the reports, review financial results for the year to date, make assignments for the next issue of the *Camp Magazine* and collaborate with media personnel about production for the magazine and video.

It also gives the camp directors a chance to discuss the online registration program with Paul Wasilkoff, who has done most of the work in customizing the EZ-Camp II program, and to learn shortcuts and techniques in a half-day technology workshop.

Ken Treybig

U.S. Holy Day Offerings Reported

Below is the reported U.S. Holy Day offering information for the fall of 2009. It does not include what was mailed in by those who could not attend or who attended international sites.

Feast of Trumpets

Attendance: 12,726

Reported offering: \$797,577.69

This represents a 1.1 percent increase in attendance and a 0.8 percent decrease in the reported offering compared to the figures for the Feast of Trumpets 2008.

Day of Atonement

Attendance: 12,665

Reported offering: \$748,378.09

This represents a 0.4 percent increase in attendance and a 1.5 percent decrease in the reported offering compared to the figures for the Day of Atonement 2008.

See "News at a Glance," page 16

Profile: Hadassa Ikar

Hadassa Ikar has a unique story. Although she now lives in Canada, Hadassa's story began much farther south in the country of Chile and continues all over the world and back again.

Hadassa was born in Santiago after her parents moved 435 miles north from Temuco. There, she grew up with her sister, Myriam, and three brothers, Israel, Yeuda and Tzvi. When she was 16 years old, she met her husband, Arie, and they were married on Jan. 25, 1950.

When Hadassa's father developed cancer, his dying request was that her mother send the children to Israel to live. Some left for Tel Aviv; but Hadassa, her husband, their four children, her mother and grandmother remained in Chile. "My husband had a shoe factory, and we owned some land. We felt we were in a very stable situation," she explained.

However, the situation in Santiago changed drastically when the military government came into power. Political and religious problems began to develop.

About this time, a couple of Hadassa's brothers visiting from Israel encouraged her and her family to move to Israel with them. They followed the advice and left Chile.

"We traveled from the port of Valparaíso to Italy by boat and from there to Israel," Hadassa remembered. "It took us a month, but we stopped at different countries along the way and had the opportunity to see different places."

Not all of her family wanted to move to Israel with her, however. Her daughter, Tamara, was engaged to a Chilean named Gabriel, and she wanted to stay behind to be with him. Her father refused.

"Tamara moved with us to Israel, but Gabriel moved to Canada. He was in Winnipeg, Canada, for four years before he traveled to Israel to be with her. They wanted to get married in Israel, but according to the Israeli law they couldn't get married there. So they left for Winnipeg."

The remainder of the family stayed in Israel for eight years until Tamara invited them to join her family in Winnipeg. They soon became Canadian citizens.

While in Canada, Hadassa and her family learned about God's truth after subscribing to the Spanish *Plain Truth* magazine. The whole family was baptized and became members of God's Church in 1987. When she and her husband began attending United Church of God,

her children didn't follow them.

In January 2000 Hadassa and her husband celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. That same year, her son David, his wife and five children left Israel to live in Honduras. "He didn't want his children to enlist in the Israeli army," she explained.

Hadassa now attends United Church of God alone after her husband, Arie, died of a heart attack several years ago. She dutifully takes two buses to attend Sabbath services with the Winnipeg congregation. When illness keeps her home on the Sabbath, Hadassa is able to listen to sermons in her native Spanish. She still travels to Chile to attend the Feast of Tabernacles, and recently she went back to Israel to visit relatives who still live there. She continues to be a source of inspiration to her fellow brethren in Canada. **UN**

This interview appeared in the September-October 2009 United News Canada.



Hadassa Ikar

FORWARD! Integrity of Heart, Skillfulness of Hand



by Clyde Kilough

What immediately comes to mind when you think of the attributes of King David?

He compiled a pretty impressive résumé—animal husbandman, writer, poet, musician and songwriter, astronomer, temple designer, warrior, administrator—but every year when I ask this question to ABC students in my Godly Leadership class, one of the first things they mention is not his talent, but God's extraordinary declaration in Acts 13:22: "I have found David...a man after My own heart."

David's mistakes are well documented, but there was something in the core of David's heart that God loved. None of us may have all of David's talents, but every one of us can attain the same fundamental spiritual quality that helped him overcome his weaknesses, that

kept him close to God and provided the strong leadership Israel needed.

David's leadership qualities are beautifully summarized in Psalm 78:72: "So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands."

The Bible doesn't say much about management, but it offers a lot about leadership, and this statement is worth thinking about in depth.

Both qualities, integrity and skill, are essential for effective leadership in all realms of life—marriage, parenting, career development, serving in the Church, pursuing an education, etc.

If you have one without the other, what will be the result? Have you ever seen someone with great skills—well-educated, intelligent, charming personality and smooth-talking, for example—but lacking integrity? What will you eventually see? In one form or another: corruption! Think of any of the high-profile scandals we see in the news, and you will see

very skilled, persuasive, powerful leaders... who lack integrity.

On the other hand, what if you have someone with great integrity, but lacking skills? You will see a person well-thought of, well-liked, someone with good intentions...but limited in their ability to get things done effectively.

Both are necessary for positive, godly leadership, but which is most important? Without a doubt, it's integrity. How many employers have moaned, "Just give me someone who is honest and a hard worker, and I'll teach him the job skills!"

Sad to say, in our personality-driven and entertainment-centered culture, integrity is an increasingly rare commodity, but it is at the core of godly leadership. Since this life is our training ground for future rulership in God's Kingdom, let's pay close attention to being people of integrity and instilling that quality in the next generation. **UN**

Clyde Kilough is president of UCGIA.

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News From Around the World

155 Celebrate the Feast in Malawi

by Elifazi Salawila

With sunny, dry and hot temperatures, the Nkopola, Malawi, Feast site welcomed 155 brethren from the United States, South Africa, Zambia, United Kingdom and Malawi.

The Feast started with some problems during the first two days. At first we did not have a proper meeting hall. The one we had used during the previous years was under renovation, and we were not informed that it wouldn't be available.

Then, we met a Catholic priest within the same area who temporarily offered us a hall, but it could be used only after 2:30 p.m. since it was already being occupied in the morning.

However, on the third day our problems were sorted out. God gave us a hand, and we found a better hall

that we could use at any time.

The messages were given by an assortment of speakers. Tony Levy from South Africa, who was with us for the first two days, focused on the purpose of life. Kambani Banda from Zambia gave a message on the need to focus on the world tomorrow. David Mills from the United States focused on the three resurrections. And Elifazi Salawila gave a sermon about life beyond the Millennium.

The activities at the Feast included

football (soccer) matches with nearby villagers, volleyball, swimming and a talent show.

The Feast this year was a remarkable experience! **UN**



Brethren at the Feast in Malawi

Tasmania Celebrates 40th Anniversary

by Lea Evans

June 20 was a crisp, winter day in Ross, Tasmania, when 44 members gathered together to celebrate the 40th anniversary of God's Church in Tasmania. The day began with a warm welcome to everyone who had traveled to celebrate this occasion. Punch

and snacks were served, and in the hour before lunch, fellowship took place with many opportunities to go down memory lane. Photos and hymn books dating as far back as 1965 were displayed for people to browse through.

The hall was a buzz of activity and laughter with stories from over 40 years ago, going back and forth from one to another. A few of our newer members thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to see where our roots were established.

The young among us couldn't believe that the older generations

were once young like themselves. What a wonderful way to remind our young people that their parents, grandparents and the members of the Church have, with God's help and support, remained faithful for over 40 years and that they, too, are now a part of the journey.

We concluded the day by cutting a cake to celebrate. The special cake had an inscription on it: "Blessed and happy is the man who doth never walk astray." These words were from the very first hymn that we sang 40 years before on that first service in June 1969. It was a joyful and happy occasion to look back from where we started—and now look forward with steadfastness and great anticipation to those welcoming words. Well done, good and faithful servants! **UN**



The congregation in Tasmania

GN Lectures in New South Wales Successful

by Doug and Eve Gray

On July 25 UCG-Australia hosted the first *Good News* seminar in the regional city of Dubbo, which is a major hub for central-west New South Wales. There are about 600 *Good News* subscribers within a 2½-hour drive, and the major purpose of the lectures was to gauge the level of interest readers may have for more personal contact with the Church.

The day of the lectures arrived with a certain amount of anxiety, mixed with excitement, in anticipation of what the day would bring. The topic for the first presentation was "Is Jesus' Message Relevant in the 21st Century?—What Was the Real Gospel Jesus Preached?"

Seven new people attended, two having traveled 2½ hours from Nyngan to be there. Forty-five pieces of literature were taken. There were 22 people present in total.

The second presentation was titled "Is God Fair?—Is This the Only Day of Salvation?" A total of 13 new people attended, with four having also attended the previous month, making a total of 24 people. Having more new people added an extra level of excitement, and most stayed afterwards to talk over refreshments.

A total of 67 pieces of literature were taken, and a number of people indicated their interest in attending a regular Bible study should we start one in the future. As a result of the presentations,

several people from other areas requested visits, and some people who couldn't attend phoned to request lecture notes and handouts.

Overall, the lectures were judged as being very successful, considering the relatively small number of invitations mailed and taking into account the experience gained and the excitement of seeing people of very different backgrounds attending.

We are hoping to conduct a similar program in Bathurst and possibly Orange in the near future. We believe God guided the activity and blessed the efforts of all concerned. The Bathurst congregation greatly appreciated the prayerful support of the members around Australia. **UN**

International News At a Glance

Stirling, Scotland, to Be British Isles Feast Site in 2010

Stirling, Scotland, will be the British Isles Feast site in 2010. David Fenney, the pastor of the Birmingham, West Midlands; Edinburgh, Scotland; and Sheffield, Yorkshire, congregations, was asked to be the Festival coordinator.

In addition, a small site in the southeast of England is being searched for as well. UCG-British Isles will consider having two sites for the Feast in subsequent years—one in northern England or North Wales, the other in the south of England.

Peter Hawkins

Good Works Donates to Typhoon Victims

Dave Baker, senior pastor to Asia, reports that he spoke with the pastors whose congregations in the Philippines were affected by the recent typhoons. The funds they have received from Good Works thus far will cover the needs of the brethren.

Although brethren in various areas have indicated a desire to collect material goods to send, the shipping as well as the customs, VAT and other charges incurred when sending goods into the country would be too expensive to provide effective assistance. Anyone who would like to assist can help by raising funds to replenish the \$5,000 already sent to assist the brethren. Go to www.ucg.org/goodworks to find out how to contribute to Good Works.

Larry and Bonnie Greider

Elder Ordained in Kenya

On the first Holy Day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Oct. 3, 2009, Moses Nyaira was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Rhodah, serve in Ogembo, Kenya.

German Good News Reaches Subscriber Goal

The November-December issue of the *Gute Nachrichten* (Good News) magazine was mailed to 6,580 readers in 20 European countries. This is another new record high

for *Gute Nachrichten* circulation, representing a 1.7 percent increase over the last issue and a 28.7 percent increase compared to the November-December 2008 issue. With this issue, the circulation goal of 6,500 subscribers by the end of 2009 has been achieved.

Paul Kieffer

UCG-Asia Adds Postal Address in Singapore

Earlier this year, UCG-Asia established a postal address in Singapore, adding an additional location for correspondence in Southeast Asia besides the Philippines. Three years ago, Richard Macaraeg from Davao, Philippines, designed a Web site for Singapore. The Web site, www.ucg-singapore.org, continues to bring in traffic and e-mail requests for Church and Feast attendance from time to time.

The Davao office has also created Web sites for other UCG congregations in Southeast Asia, www.ucg-srilanka.org, www.ucg-hongkong.org and www.ucg-india.org.

Jeff Caudle

Mall Exhibit Yields 1,020 GN Subscribers

A total of 1,020 *Good News* subscribers were added to our mailing list after UCG-Philippines concluded a five-day exhibit at Robinson's Place, a mall in Tacloban City, Leyte, from Oct. 18 to 22. Many more may be added later, as quite a number took a sample copy but did not subscribe during the exhibit.

The mall exhibit was timed to coincide with the 65th anniversary of the late General Douglas MacArthur's landing at Red Beach, Leyte, on Oct. 20, 1944.

The two LCD monitors on the GN booth cycled through 12 *Beyond Today* ads as well as a 10-minute segment of World War II footage taken from the 2004 Feast video titled "I Shall Return."

Almost all the Tacloban brethren showed up to support the exhibit by helping set up the booth (and later taking it down), taking turns manning the booth or just being there to lend their moral support.

And what a success it was! Many visitors were impressed by the magazine. Midway through, the 2,000 back copies available for distribution ran out due to the huge demand. The members responded by bringing out their own old or extra copies until the new stock arrived. This showed the love, attitude and dedication of the brethren to be a part of spreading the gospel through *The Good News* magazine.

Isis Macaraeg

United Youth Corps: Dinnertime

by Audry Bauer

Around 6:30 in the evening the phone call is made, “Dinner’s ready.” It’s at that time that we gather around the table to share something very basic—dinner. But this shared meal is part of the glue that holds us together and gives each of us support while we are spending this year in Jordan as volunteers with the United Youth Corps.

Each of us goes through the day at our respective positions striving to be productive and to interact positively and successfully with those with whom we come in contact. We pray that God gives us understanding and guidance to be able to do those things in the right way. It’s a pursuit we follow day in, day out.

One way God grants us the ability to interact in the world in a positive way—whether it’s here in Jordan or anywhere else—is through the support of the family He’s blessed us with. Those of us serving in Jordan have found family in each other.

Every night we take turns around the table sharing our various experiences of the day. Whether they be frustrations with seeming inefficiencies in how tasks are completed here in

Jordan, the humorous moments of attempted conversations in Arabic, the successes of establishing common ground with someone or the myriad other events we encounter throughout the day, we share them with one another.

We have made this a regular routine to end the day, and it is one of the most vital aspects of iron sharpening iron that helps us face another day with the right attitude and renewed energy (Proverbs 27:17).

The sharpening comes from rejoicing in each other’s successes. It comes from lightening the frustrations we feel by being able to help each other put them in perspective. And it comes from sharing ideas of how to handle a particular situation or deal with a certain task we have been given. It even comes from knowing what to keep in our prayers for one another.

Dinnertime enables us to slow down and reflect on our daily events together. We wouldn’t experience this year to the same extent without sharing this daily time, simply because we would be more limited to our own thoughts and perspectives. The absence of daily fellowship at the dinner table would not make this year in Jordan impossible, but it would make it much more difficult.

The Sabbath is also of utmost value in steering us all together in the right direction. Each week we come together to praise God, singing hymns and listening to sermon messages to reorient our thoughts and pursuits.

One of the lessons that has come from something so simple as shar-

ing to spend time together and sharpen the iron in our brothers and sisters. Perhaps it takes a phone call, a drive to



United Youth Corps coordinator Doug Horschak joins Tine Banda and Audry Bauer for dinner



Jamie Franks, Stephanie and Eduardo Elizondo and Kelley Schreiber sit down to dinner



Eating lunch on the steps of the Treasury at Petra

ing dinnertime and the Sabbath has been that we as a family here in Jordan (and on a larger scale as a Church family) can benefit and grow so much more when we share our experiences with each other on a regular basis.

We may be blessed to live with a physical family that we can talk to every day and can help sharpen each other (as we are here in Jordan). But in other cases it may take a little more effort to be able

visit someone or an invitation to share a meal.

It might not be impossible to be productive and positive in the world without constant interaction with fellow brethren, but it makes it that much more difficult and incomplete. The tool and blessing we have in each other that God has given us is amazing and can provide a lot of growth, but only

if we put forth the effort to make contact. **UN**

Follow the 2009 United Youth Corps–Jordan team—Eduardo and Stephanie Elizondo, Audry Bauer, Kelley Schreiber and Jamie Franks—on their blog at www.uycjordan09.blogspot.com.

Good Works: Jordan Outreach and Volunteer Project

by Larry and Bonnie Greider

The United Youth Corps–Jordan project is in its third year, and follows in the footsteps of the Ambassador Foundation/College student volunteers of the 1980s and ’90s. Our volunteers serve in the YMWA Bunayat School, the Amman Baccalaureate School, and the Regional Human Security Center.

Those serving as assistant teachers in the YMWA Bunayat School for the Mentally Handi-

capped are able to make a meaningful and unique contribution to this institution that was begun by Princess Sarvath of Jordan in 1982. Though underfunded, the Bunayat Center serves as one of the few schools in the Middle East that reach out to handicapped children without regard to financial background.

The United Youth Corps also provides two student teachers at the Amman Baccalaureate School.

While the ABS is a premier school in Jordan that serves the entire population, our service at the school through student teaching builds bridges and relationships within this primarily Arab school.

the Regional Human Security Center (RHSC). The work of the RHSC is focused on researching how best to care for the needs of displaced families and refugees—striving to raise the level of awareness of humanitar-

a year out of their lives to serve the needs and interests of these endeavors in Jordan.

Housing is provided for all of the volunteers, and two of the institutions provide a minimal living-expense stipend for food and basic transportation. However, the United Youth Corps has to secure the funding for the living-expense stipend for the two YMWA Bunayat volunteers as well as the transportation costs of the ministry overseeing and visiting the volunteers throughout the year.

The total need being sought through Good Works contributions is \$17,900.

Other Good Works Projects

The last few weeks have seen floods in the Philippines and more famine in Nigeria. Thankfully, Good Works has been able to send some relief to the brethren in these areas. In the future we hope to highlight needs around the world and solicit donations from congregations as well as members.

Go to www.ucg.org/goodworks and follow the latest projects we hope to serve. **UN**

Larry and Bonnie Greider are the coordinators for Good Works.



2009-10 United Youth Corps–Jordan volunteers Audry Bauer, Eduardo Elizondo, Kelley Schreiber, Stephanie Elizondo and Jamie Franks



Jamie Franks teaching at the YMWA Bunayat School

Our volunteers endeavor to set an example of true service, understanding and love in our fractured world and, in particular, the complex region of the Middle East.

At present, we also have one volunteer who serves as a research assistant at the nonprofit research organization

ian and human security issues among academics and policy makers at the national and international levels.

Each of these schools and institutions are nonprofit and do their work under the patronage and auspices of the royal family of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Our volunteers sacrifice

Blessings Through Service

■ Dan and Cindy Harper returned to Vinogradov, Ukraine, this summer to serve at the second English summer camp program at the Light of Love mission for street children. The program was sponsored by LifeNets.

by Cindy Harper

Over the last two years my husband Daniel and I have been blessed with the opportunity to travel and volunteer in countries in Eastern Europe and Africa. This summer we returned to Africa to help with United Youth Camps and to western Ukraine to take part in an ESL (English as a second language) program for street children for the second year in a row.

In June 2006 we were living in Augusta, Georgia, when we received an unexpected call from someone urgently requesting that Daniel interview for a job for which he had never applied. What made this job opportunity so unique was that it was in France. We had been looking for an international opportunity to volunteer or help serve others in some way, and it seemed our prayers to God were being answered.

Through a series of miraculous events, Daniel was hired and accepted the position, which started in December 2006. I joined him in April, immediately after finishing a master's degree in teaching languages. We had prayed for two years for these opportunities, but we didn't know they would come about through living and working in France. We realized that God does not always answer prayer in the ways we expect, but we constantly have to be prepared to answer the call saying, "Here am I! Send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

Finding Opportunities to Serve

The move and job change placed us strategically in Europe with more vacation time than we would ever

have in the States. As we prayed for God to show us how to use the time and opportunities He was laying before us, the possibilities began to open up. We began to integrate ourselves into life in France as well as the work of the Church in Europe, England, Ireland and Africa.

We heard about a LifeNets project in western Ukraine, a place Daniel and I never really imagined ourselves going. We were able to accompany Vic and Bev Kubik on a trip to visit the people and to see the progress of the work going on in Vinogradov.

and Stefan Saxin from Sweden, joined us; and we collaborated on ideas and ways that each of us could contribute. During our first visit in December, we learned about the children's ages, educational levels and their interests, which included a love of singing.

We later incorporated this interest in music with a program that taught English in part through songs, which I was excited to find. It all came together in June 2008, when the four of us traveled to this little town in the mountains of western

Ukraine. We decided to divide the 40 students into two classes: one of new students and one of returning. Daniel and I led the class of returning students. I was ecstatic when we started to introduce a song from the previous year and most of the stu-

Returning to Teach

Through generous sponsors and the work of LifeNets, we were able to hold the English summer camp program for the second year in a row during the summer of 2009. Ken Zahora returned to serve, this time bringing his wife, Cherie.

Again, much time and energy went into lesson and activity planning, both for English classes and ways to interact positively with the children during the rest of the day at camp. I wasn't sure what to expect on our return. Would they remember us or what we had taught them? Had we made any impact the summer before? Was all of this worth it?

We decided to divide the 40 students into two classes: one of new students and one of returning. Daniel and I led the class of returning students. I was ecstatic when we started to introduce a song from the previous year and most of the stu-

ware because we had been able to give the children a good foundation in English as well as stir their interest and motivation in learning the language.

A Lasting Effect

A wonderful feeling of relief washed over me as I realized that the time, effort and energy that we put into the previous year's program did actually make a difference in the lives of these children. This experience helped to lead me from a self-centered point of view to one of more outgoing concern for others. I now see that by building our empathy for others through visiting them, serving them and intertwining our lives with theirs, we are able to develop true godly love for one another.

I also found that volunteering and integrating myself into the lives of the people has made me more sensitive and aware of the needs of others. National news reports of power, food and gas shortages are more personal to me, because I now know first-hand the beautiful people who are affected by these problems. It makes my prayers for them, for the world and for the Kingdom that much more fervent and real.

Through our work, we deepened our relationships with both the children and staff this year and we left truly thankful yet again for the opportunity to be a part of the program and the work of the Light of Love mission.

Serving has brought a sense of purpose and meaning to our lives. We never expected to feel so abundantly blessed through these experiences and opportunities to serve others in various ways.

Through traveling and participating in various projects, we have met many people and learned a lot about the challenges, shared struggles, hopes and dreams of our brothers and sisters all over the world. Their lives and examples have taught us in so many ways that we could not have imagined. **UN**

For more information about LifeNets projects, go to www.lifeness.org.



During our visit we were very impressed with the service of Vasyl and Irina Polichko and their volunteers at the Light of Love mission for street children. Their full-time volunteer work was making a real and obvious difference every day in the lives of many children.

We sat down with Vasyl Polichko at the end of our visit to see if there was any way Daniel and I could help them. We were surprised to learn that they wanted help teaching the children English. We were happy to work with them to set up an English program during their summer camp the following summer.

Beginning the Program

Putting together the first program was a challenge. Two more volunteers, Ken Zahora from Indiana

I now see that by building our empathy for others through visiting them, serving them and intertwining our lives with theirs, we are able to develop true godly love for one another.

Ukraine. It was two weeks of hard work, triumphs and challenges.

Immersed in Ukrainian culture and time, we struggled to communicate and be effective as we implemented the program, figured out their pace and way of life and worked to teach and mentor the children both in English and in Christian values. We learned to be flexible, to slow down, to work together, to compromise at times, to stand firm on important things, to handle behavioral issues and to communicate in ways other than words.

We were all touched by the faith of the Sabbatarian volunteers and the selfless service they gave to these street children every day. They were a wonderful example of love and lay-

dents were able to finish the words completely on their own!

Over the next two weeks, many of the children made significant efforts to use the English they were learning to communicate with us. A major goal for the program was that the students would be motivated to learn and actually use English. We knew that this could lead to a language advantage in their schooling and eventual employment.

Given their difficult, often traumatic backgrounds, these children need all the help and advantages they can get. We set up Rosetta Stone (a language-learning software) at the center for continued English learning after our departure. It was a good time to introduce the soft-



Cindy and Daniel with campers



Ukrainian and American volunteers with some of the campers



Afternoon activities included sports and free play

How You Can Prepare to Write for Church Publications and Web Sites

■ The Church's plan for preaching the gospel includes developing volunteer writers and editors to help produce the new content necessary to reach people in the Internet age. Is this a way that you can serve?

by Mike Bennett

Peter Holmes works on his writing draft during an ABC media class



Do you have an interest in sharing the gospel of the Kingdom of God and God's way of life through writing? Are you developing your skills with the written word? Do you like to share stories and Christian living tips? If so, there may be ways you can serve as a volunteer writer or editor for the Church's publications and Web sites.

Earning Your Education

Much of the craft of writing can be learned through high school and college classes, so the Church does not try to duplicate these foundational lessons in how to write clear sentences, concise paragraphs and logically arranged articles. We cannot teach grammar, spelling, transitions, structure, readability or word

choice. These can be learned in a good community college class or through helpful books on English composition and article writing.

UCG is a small church and cannot afford to create and staff a complete training program for writers. We encourage potential writers to take charge of their own educations, to study English and communications skills, as well as to broadly educate themselves.

But instruction is not enough. Real writing education comes through reading widely as well as writing (and rewriting) regularly.

UCG does offer some specialized training for writing specifically for Church publications and Web sites. Training has been offered at ABC and at the Winter Family Week-

end in Louisville, Kentucky, and we plan to offer some of this material again as an e-mail writing course open to those who have not taken it before.

To apply for this program, send the following information by e-mail to mike_bennett@ucg.org: your name, pastor's name (we

will contact the pastor for a recommendation), writing-related education and experience.

Also, in 100 words or less, please tell us why you would like to take the course and attach a sample of your writing. Only a limited number can be accepted.

Getting Guidelines

After you have developed your writing skills, consider your interests and talents. Do you prefer to write to teens and young adults (through *Vertical Thought*), to Church members (in *United News*) or to the general public (through *Virtual Christian Magazine*, many of the Church's Web sites, etc.)? Are you interested in writing articles, commentaries, tips or Bible les-

sons? For these publications and sites, you can receive writer's guidelines by e-mailing mike_bennett@ucg.org.

World News and Prophecy and *The Good News* are mostly staff written and are generally not the first place writers would get published.

Prepare a Proposal

After getting guidelines, read the publication or Web site and look for topics that would be interesting and helpful to the readers while helping to fulfill the mission of the Church. For longer articles and lessons it's a good idea to submit your idea in a paragraph-long proposal to the managing editor.

Explain the specific purpose, introduction, points and conclusion you plan to use. Ask for approval to write the piece and for any suggestions from the managing editor.

Write and Rewrite

Writing is hard work, but with an approved proposal and any suggestions from the editor, you've got a good start. Research carefully, construct logically and rewrite relentlessly. Let it sit overnight and read it again. Get constructive criticism from someone in the target audience or another trusted friend.

After you have polished your article, send it off to your local

pastor to approve and send on to the managing editor. Then comes the hard part. Sometimes this involves facing rejection. Sometimes it means a long wait. Sometimes it includes extensive editing. All of these can be part of the learning process.

Our editors want your writing to be effective and for you to improve. Our need for new material often outstrips our time and ability to mentor and even communicate in great detail with potential writers. This is frustrating for us, and we wish we could adequately thank and train those who willingly donate their time and mental energy to this challenging task.

If your article does not get used, please know that we do appreciate the labor of love that went into it. Some items may appear later, but some may just be part of your writing education process.

We have the greatest message and the most important information to share with the people of this dying world. If you are up to the challenge, we encourage you to take the steps in this article to help create the new, interesting, helpful and relevant content that magazine readers and Web searchers will be looking for. **UN**

Mike Bennett is UCG's Web content editor.

Billions See United Church of God Online Ads!

by Peter Eddington

It's been a very good year for our online literature requests (the advertising industry refers to these requests as conversions). We are projecting to end 2009 with a 38 percent increase over 2008!

These booklet and magazine requests come from our online advertising campaigns at Yahoo, Google and MSN (Bing). Results come from keyword searches and content placement advertising. As you have searched the Web, you have no doubt come across some of United's work in this regard.

Please see the "Total Literature Conversions" graph below, which pictures the percentage of increase very well. Note that the figure for

2009 includes projected (but fully expected) requests for November and December.

One of the main reasons for the marked increase from year to year (especially 2008 and 2009) is the implementation of *display advertising* to complement our text advertising of years past.

Billions of Online Advertising Impressions

What is very encouraging from the charts below is that the number of impressions (possible views of our ads) is actually less than in years past. And yet the conversions have still gone up! It has been shown by many studies that combining display advertising with text advertising produces a higher per-

centage of response. We are seeing this pan out for us as well.

The "Total Online Ad Impressions" chart below has a scale that needs to be multiplied by 1 million. For example, the number of impressions for 2007 was about 2 billion, for 2008 it was 3.5 billion, and for 2009 we are projecting 2.5 billion impressions.

The huge jump from 2006 to 2007 is because of increased advertising impressions made available by Google and Yahoo to online advertisers. The industry exploded after 2006.

Once again, please note that the figure for 2009 includes projected (but fully expected) impressions for November and December. It's very exciting to see our online

advertising placed before billions of eyes every year! The reach of the Internet is truly amazing and at an affordable cost.

Please continue to pray for the success of United's online proclamation work, an effort that does its part to announce the wonderful good news of God's Kingdom. We have a message of peace, joy and hope for mankind. There is an exciting future ahead for those who will hear. But it's also a message of repentance and commitment—certainly a challenge in today's increasingly secular world.

Beyond Today Online Visitors

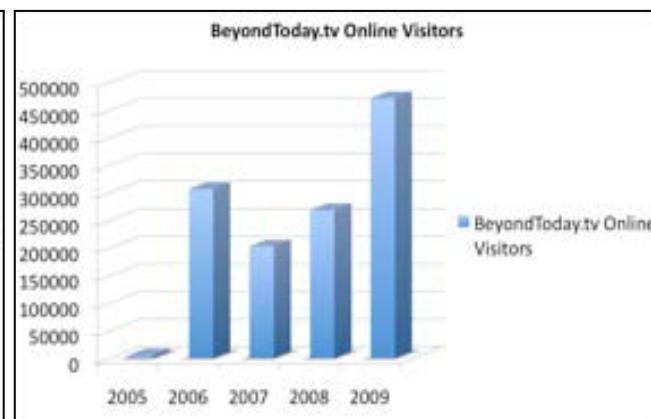
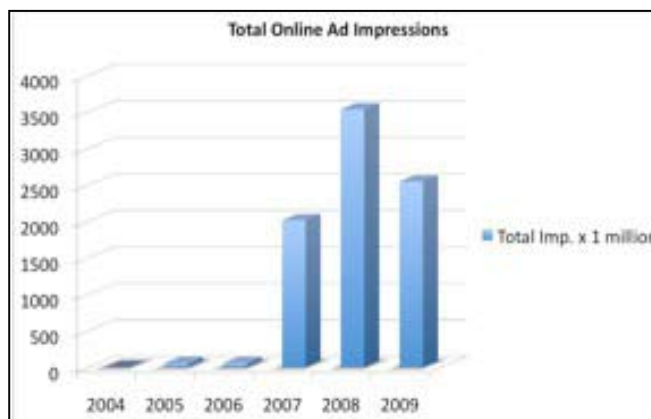
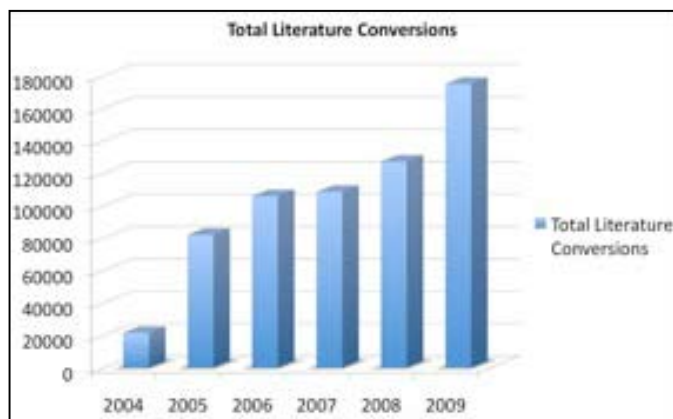
Online traffic to our *Beyond Today* Web site has been showing

an overall upward trend since the program's inception.

Please take a look at the chart below showing annual visits to this site from 2005 through 2009. (Again, the 2009 figure includes November and December projections.)

During December of this year we will be recording our 128th *Beyond Today* program. Please continue to pray for the success of our television efforts and that we'll strike a chord with our audience. We want our viewers and readers to work toward a greater involvement in God's work—as He calls and as He wills. **UN**

Peter Eddington is production manager for *Media and Communications Services*.



“Branding,” continued from page 1**Research Results**

Prior to the workshop, which took place in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio, Northlich reviewed existing UCG marketing materials, previous research and the Strategic Plan. They also conducted online surveys of 898 members and nonmembers (*Good News* subscribers) to research the perception that both groups have of the United Church of God.

The results were very encouraging.

The top four themes that those surveyed said were unique to the United Church of God were our doctrinal integrity and authenticity, our focus on promoting direct relationships with God while taking care of our members, our unique doctrine and our strong media presence and outreach.

What was also revealing was that the results of both groups—members and nonmembers alike—tended to mirror each other. For example, 98 percent of UCG members surveyed said they felt they had a direct relationship with God, compared to 90 percent of nonmembers. The same trend held true for a variety of other surveyed questions.

“We expect that [by] exploring and defining ourselves more concisely

through this branding exercise we will align our communication efforts, help more clearly define our direction and improve our organizational culture,” said Linda Register, a member of the Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregation and marketing consultant who is on the Branding Task Force.

“It will create positive momentum for the work of the Church. Once we have demonstrated that we deliver on the promise symbolized by our brand, we will gain the trust of our audiences. This should be a positive step in attracting potential members called by God.”

Revealing UCG’s Brand Essence

In his presentation, Brian Newberry, Northlich brand engagement manager, explained that a brand essence is important because it provides a long-term aspirational direction for the brand. It unifies people’s experiences across all contact points, provides a source of inspiration for innovation and growth and builds synergy.

He went on to say that a brand essence is not created but revealed, since it’s already at the heart of the organization.

During the course of the intensive eight-hour workshop, Mr. Newberry and his team facilitated various



Tom Disher, David Gosse, Larry Salyer and Tine Banda

group exercises to reveal what key attributes make the United Church of God unique among the 38,000 Christian denominations in the world.

Exercises included discovering current positive and negative attributes of the United Church of God, identifying characteristics of segments of our target audience, discussing the reasons to believe United can meet expectations and determining descriptions of how the Church should be perceived by the public.

“For me, I felt the most helpful exercise was trying to concisely express the benefits we believe our message can offer. The facilitators referred to these benefits as the ‘promises’ we make to those we reach,” commented ABC instructor David Johnson.

“The brand essence meeting was not only insightful and informative but also challenging and fun,” said UCG media producer Clay Thornton. “During the workshop portions I liked moving from table to table with each exercise to interact with a whole new group of people.”

Philip Aust, a member of the Atlanta, Georgia, congregation and associate professor of communications at Kennesaw State University, said, “I thought the branding workshop was valuable for three reasons: First, it helped clarify what is unique about the United Church of God. Second, it reinforced how much workshop participants were in agreement regarding God’s truth. And third, it distinguished the chal-



Darris McNeely, Scott Ashley and Linda Register discuss the benefits the United Church of God offers to members and prospective members

lenges and opportunities of reaching people in the U.S. and around the world in an age of rapidly changing technology.”

He went on to say that it was “inspiring to see how participants, who in many cases had not met before the workshop and were different in so many ways (male and female, age, ethnic background, career), were unified in spirit as they worked to improve how UCG presents itself to the public.”

Mr. Aust also related that he was “surprised and pleased that Northlich team members recognized our passion to act as guardians of God’s truth in terms of our desire to reach people who have no knowledge of God’s Kingdom and righteousness.”

What’s Next?

With the data collected through its surveys and through the workshop, Northlich will now generate a full report of their research to the Branding Task Force with several recommended essence statements.

They will then test these essence statements by surveying our audience (members and *GN* subscribers) to find out which statements resonate the most with what the United Church of God is and what it does.

The task force will then work with Northlich to narrow down options before presenting them to the Council of Elders.

“We’re trying to fulfill the strategy in our Strategic Plan that requires us to ‘communicate who we are and what we do to increase audience awareness of the benefits of God’s way,” said Peter Eddington, production manager for Media and Communications Services. “We’re not trying to change our message. We’re trying to find the most effective way to proclaim it.”

“Now we’re asking Northlich to help us distill that into an essence statement.”

The entire process is expected to be completed sometime early next year. **UN**

A Brand Is...

“Branding isn’t about crass commercialism, manipulation, corporate abuses or bad advertising. The AIGA Center for Brand Experience calls it simply, ‘A person’s perception of a product, service, experience, or organization.’ I prefer to call it ‘the story that surrounds a product, service, person or organization.’ In other words: what do people think of when they think of you, your product or your organization?” (Phil Cooke, *Branding Faith*, 2008, pp. 10-11).

“A brand exists in your mind. It’s a collection of associations or feelings people have about a particular product, service, or an organization. Branding is the tangible process of creating the signals that generate these associations” (Allen Adamson, writer of *BrandSimple*).

“Simply because in a world that is bewildering in terms of competitive clamor, in which rational choice has become almost impossible, brands represent clarity, reassurance, consistency, status, membership—everything that enables human beings to help define themselves. Brands represent identity” (Wally Olins, chairman of Saffron Brand Consultants).

“Survey,” continued from page 1

in response to the open-ended questions alone. Each of those suggestions, ideas, compliments and critiques was read and incorporated into the findings.

The Council of Elders and the administration took those statistics and suggestions from the survey to help us develop our comprehensive Strategic Plan and Operation Plan. Your input also helped drive a number of changes and improvements in our media and communications efforts and our education programs.

While our first survey included over 3,000 responses, it did not reflect the entire spectrum of ages that attend United

Church of God. Only one-third of the responses came from participants aged 45 and younger. Moreover, only 6 percent were between the ages of 13 and 25.

We would really like to get a wide variety of input on this survey. Having the opinions and thoughts of our teens, young adults, young parents, seniors, elders and employees will provide us with the best and most balanced results. Everyone who attends United Church of God Sabbath services is invited to take the survey!

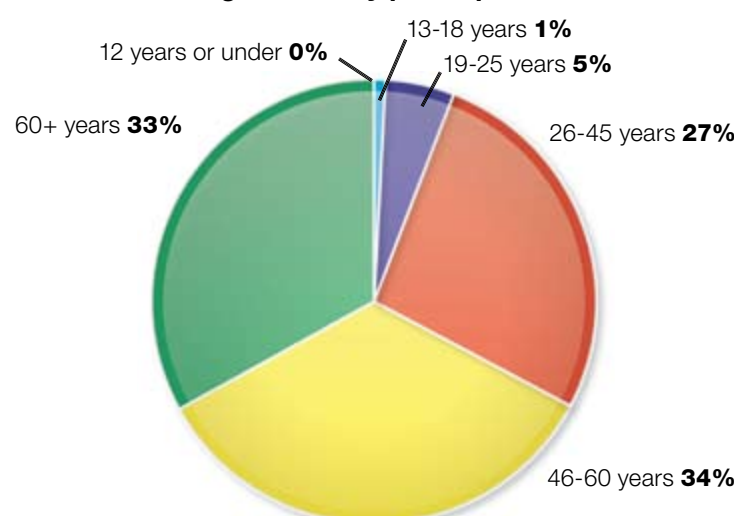
We need your help and input by completing the anonymous Attendee Survey between Dec. 12, 2009, and Jan. 10, 2010. You can access the survey online at members.ucg.org. The survey

should only take 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

If you cannot access the survey online or you do not have access to a computer, please check with your local pastor and ask him to provide you with a copy of the survey. Complete and return it to your pastor or the person he designates to input the information into the online survey. Unfortunately, we cannot accept handwritten surveys sent to the home office.

Results of the survey will be available later in 2010. Thank you for your help! **UN**

David Register and Julie Zutz are members of the Education Advisory Task Force. Go to members.ucg.org to take the survey.

**2007-2008 Attendee Survey
Age of survey participants**

Treasure Digest

The Path to Godly Character

God gives us a calling that sets us on a path of change for the rest of our lives. While we anticipate and look forward to the blessings that come from living God's way of life, there are also challenges along the way. God wants us to become more like Him so that we can be part of His family, and that requires a serious change (Romans 8:6).

Change from carnal nature to godly character is hard. Oftentimes we look at life and see a seemingly endless trial (or series of trials) and wonder if we will ever come out intact on the other side. It may seem that the more we change and obey God, the more we see the human nature that pulls at us to live differently. Does that describe your life at times? How do we keep from becoming weary when we see more and more that we need to change and overcome in our lives?

God sees this struggle as well and encourages us that the trials and circumstances we face will not be our undoing. He will not allow anything to come upon us that we can't handle with Him in our life (1 Corinthians 10:13).

In his book *Mere Christianity* C.S. Lewis wrote an interesting insight to this human struggle and why it can be so overwhelming at times: "When a man is getting better, he understands more and more clearly the evil that is still left in him. When a man is getting worse, he understands his own badness less and less. A moderately bad man knows he is not very good; a thoroughly bad man thinks he is all right. This is common sense,

really. You understand sleep when you are awake, not while you are sleeping. You can see mistakes in arithmetic when your mind is working properly; while you are making them, you cannot see them. You can understand the nature of drunkenness when you are sober, not when you are drunk. Good people know about good and evil; bad people do not know about either."

From God's perspective, things are not getting worse in our lives when we see more and more of our human nature that is at odds with God's way of life. Rather, things are actually getting better as our senses become more aware of God's standard (Hebrews 5:14).



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God is not so concerned about how comfortable we can be in this life as much as He is concerned about the comfort we can have in Him. Like King David, we see our sins before God (Psalm 51:3), but He is faithful toward us and, through Jesus Christ, will help us complete the process (Hebrews 12:2).

Our rest will be in God, and our part is to remain diligent so that those trials we go through will ultimately have meaning (Hebrews 4:9-11).

Dan Dowd

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

Turning the Hearts . . . Your Child and the Internet

Did you know that at any given moment over 50,000 potential child molesters are on the Internet?

Did you know that 60 percent of online teens have gotten an e-mail or IM (Instant Message) from a total stranger and 63 percent of these say they have responded?

Did you know that 9 out of 10 children between the ages of 8 and 16 have viewed pornography on the Internet, in most cases unintentionally (London School of Economics, January 2002)?

I recently attended a seminar on Internet behavioral problems presented by Andrew Levander. The information above came from his presentation. With these statistics in mind, parents need to be aware of their children's Internet activity and to learn how to safeguard their children from potentially life-damaging behavioral problems.

The Internet is a wonderful source of research and information. It has potential for excellent help and instant communication. However, along with the good uses come the potential dangers. The primary dangers are exposure to pornography, contact with sexual predators, sites that promote undesirable behavior such as drug abuse, self-mutilation, the occult and other debilitating actions or habits.

Parental Oversight is Key

For many, social interaction sites like MySpace or Facebook provide a means for communicating with others. However, dangers lurk as well, since some may masquerade as friends and join in discussions.

Be aware of the information your children post and receive on these sites, in order to ensure your children do not post revealing personal information to strangers. Our children hang out at these sites with their friends and perhaps others who aren't so friendly. So, we need to be aware of our children's Internet activity.

Besides limiting Internet access to computers in family areas such as the family room or den, parents can also filter what their children have access to on the Internet through various types of software. Here is a list of some: SafeEyes at safeeyes.com, Cyber Patrol at cyberpatrol.com, CyberSitter at cybersitter.com or Net Nanny at netnanny.com. For accountability software, here are a few suggestions: X-3watch at www.x3watch.com, ComputerCop at www.computercop.com/homeprods.html or Parents Cyber Alert at www.itcompany.com/cyberalert.htm. Please check these out and see if any will fit your need.

The Internet, with its social sites, information and games, can be a wonderful tool if used properly. But, sadly there are those who would use it to harm others. As parents, please be aware of your children's Internet habits and usage and protect them from potentially life-damaging events.

The Wisdom Promise

Have you ever noticed how many promises are in the Bible?

One promise in particular concerns wisdom. In James 1:5, we are given this promise: "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."

Do we ask God to honor this promise in our own lives?

God cannot lie; if He makes a promise, He will keep it. We are admonished to ask for wisdom when making big decisions in our lives. We go to God, and we ask Him to lead and direct us, to help us make the proper decisions.

But do we make a habit of asking God for wisdom on a daily basis? We need wisdom every day of our lives, not only during difficult times.

God's wisdom is free to each of us. As we study God's Word and learn how He wants us to live, it is God who gives us the understanding to put it into practice. Wisdom can't be compared with the knowledge of this world, the degrees from the best universities or the minds of today's geniuses. It is from God only, and it is offered freely to you and all who seek it.

Proverbs 16:16 says, "How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver."

Balancing work and family can be difficult. When you consider how valuable wisdom is, it should become a priority to ask for it each and every day.

Parents learn the value of teaching their children to pray for wisdom. They want to help them understand how vital it can be to daily life. Attending school can bring challenges, and facing those challenges requires wisdom. Teach them of God's promise and seek wisdom together when needed.

Many people dream of being rich and want more. The world is fixated on bigger

and better things in life. Wisdom offers a greater wealth than any riches this world could offer, and it is ours, if only we ask.

Sherrie Giddens

St. Louis, Missouri, congregation

Resolve to Be Optimistic

Even for strong Christians who are grounded in their faith, discouragement can easily sneak its way into our hearts and minds as life deals out turmoil. As we struggle with the challenges and difficulties of everyday life or things that happen to us that are unfair or unwarranted, it is easy to get pulled into a habitual mindset of negativity.

How we deal with the challenges we face will depend entirely upon our perspective. God is there, and He does more for us each and every day than we deserve. But it's so easy to lose sight of the good, because we can be caught up in the reality of the bad. How do we combat this human attitude?

Well, we need resolve—resolve to have an attitude like Christ.

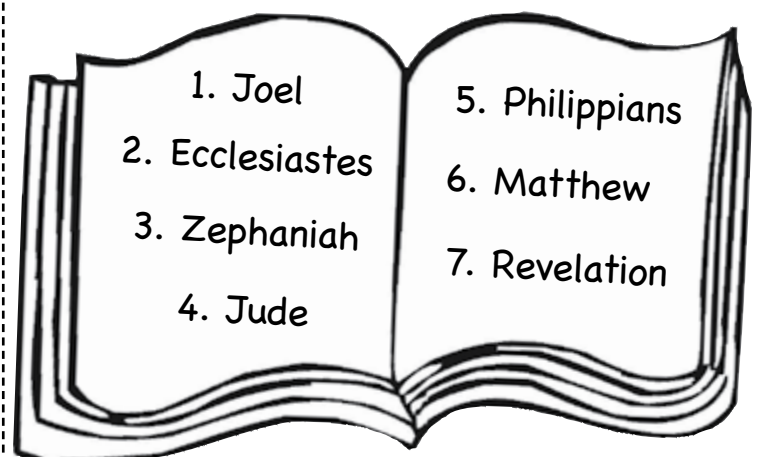
Take inventory of every blessing: life, your every breath, every heartbeat, time spent with a spouse or loved one. What is on your inventory list today? If you were honest with yourself, would you say you have been looking for the positive aspects of the situations in your life? Are you considering how God could be using those things to draw you closer to Him? Or have you been primarily focused on the negative?

During times of negativity, we actually become our own enemy. We wage a battle in our mind, looking at our situation from our own perspective, instead of considering what God may be doing through our situation.

So, in order to change our minds, we have to choose to change the way we think. "Since Jesus went through everything you're going through and more, learn to think like him.

Answer to last issue's puzzle:

Unscramble These Books of the Bible



"FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF FEAR, BUT OF POWER AND OF LOVE AND OF A SOUND MIND."

(2 TIMOTHY 1:7)

Gary Antion



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Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old sinful habit of always expecting to get your own way. Then you'll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyr-

annized by what you want" (1 Peter 4:1-2, The Message).

Winston Churchill once said, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." The more you practice challenging your thought patterns, the more automatic it will become. Changes may not take place immediately, but over time the challenge gets easier, and optimism can become the norm instead of the exception.

*Stuart Segall
Pastor, Crescent City and Eureka,
California, congregations*

by your tongue or have you shattered those connections because of the wrong use?

A bridge is a connector. Building bridges by what we say in our personal lives can connect us with others or connect other people with each other.

The book of Proverbs offers a great deal of insight into how we use our speech: "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life" (Proverbs 15:4). "Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and health to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24). "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).

When someone says something negative about someone else, do you say something that will build a bridge, or do you chime in and add to the negativity, thereby destroying that bridge? We should be building bridges between people, not tearing down or destroying bridges that are already there.

It is commonly taught that it takes three weeks for a habit to be formed. Can you go three weeks without saying anything negative about someone else? Can you instead turn negativity around and say something positive about someone every time you have the opportunity? Does your tongue give sweetness to the soul of others and health to their bones? Is your tongue a tree of life? What is on your tongue?

*Judy Swanson
London, Kentucky, congregation*

What Is on Your Tongue?

"But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8). Is your tongue full of deadly poison? It's called deadly poison because reputations of honest and innocent people can be destroyed by what has been said about them.

What is on your tongue? When you open your mouth, do words of grace, kindness and wisdom pour forth? Have you built up people

see the superhero explode into action, save the day and then fade into the background until some evil rises again. The superhero is always there to save the "good guys" and to triumph over the "bad guys."

All the other people, however, are generally seen simply as innocent bystanders. The comic book superhero really can't be bothered to evaluate anything deeper than getting the bad guys. Everyone else is pretty happy with the results: "Just rescue me and leave me alone."

Obviously the reality of human life is not like a comic book. All of humanity needs to be rescued from a very real evil. When we look at human behavior through the eyes of God, we find that He wants to save all of mankind, every human being, from the evil he or she faces.

Who, or where, is that evil? Unfortunately it is in each of us. It is sin. The apostle Paul writes, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Yes, we are all the bad guys. And in addition, we all need to be rescued—saved from the penalty of sin. Again God says through the apostle Paul, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). We need a true hero, and only Jesus Christ has the power and ability to save us from the death we have earned. Only He can give us the gift of eternal life.

Quite unlike the comic book superhero, who really isn't interested in changing anyone's life, the true hero, Jesus Christ, does have require-

ments and knows we need to change. Immediately after His baptism, Jesus Christ began preaching about the Kingdom of God and said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). God wants to save us, but He doesn't simply want to rescue us from our discomforts or suffering and then leave. God wants us to change; He wants to make each of us a new person who can ultimately become a member of His family.

While the world recognizes we have a need for rescue and longs for a superhero, human beings don't really want to change or to admit that our own choices are at the root of the problems we see splashed across the headlines. God's solution is to change the inner man through an

ongoing process of repentance. That is the certain and lasting way to be saved from the troubles of this world. That is God's plan to bring us all into the Kingdom of God as His children. Thanks be to God, the true hero and savior of the world.

*Milan Janicich
Salem, Oregon, congregation*



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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 *UnitedNews* at the home office. Guidelines are available on request (UN@ucg.org).

Names of Jesus Christ

Look up the Bible verses to find some of Jesus Christ's names and titles. Then find them in the puzzle below.

1. John 4:25 **Messiah**
2. Isaiah 9:6 **Wonderful**
3. John 14:6 **Truth**
4. John 15:5 **Vine**
5. Matthew 2:6 (KJV) **Governor**
6. John 1:14 **Word**
7. 1 John 5:12 **Son**
8. John 1:36 **Lamb**
9. 1 Corinthians 10:4 **Rock**
10. Acts 3:15 **Prince**
11. John 10:7 **Door**
12. Philippians 3:20 **Savior**
13. Ephesians 4:15 **Head**

R	E	N	S	E	W	N	D	T	S
N	S	S	T	H	R	E	P	A	E
A	N	L	A	M	B	C	G	S	O
L	U	F	R	E	D	N	O	W	N
K	V	O	P	S	N	I	V	A	D
C	B	C	C	S	S	R	E	T	O
O	W	E	N	I	V	P	R	R	O
R	O	I	V	A	S	O	N	H	E
T	R	U	T	H	D	O	O	R	A
I	D	A	E	H	A	R	R	V	N

Puzzle by Whitney Smith, Louisville, Kentucky, congregation

Children's
Corner

Children's
Corner



From the Word

Are Our Children Called? (Part 1)

■ This doctrinal study paper, originally published in November 1998, provides an in-depth look into the topic of whether the children of members of God's Church are called and how the answer to that question affects the expectations and approach parents take when teaching their children the ways of God.

Are the children of members of God's Church called now? The answer to this question affects how parents view their children, as well as the expectations they can have of their children. No less important, the answer also influences how children perceive themselves and the self-expectations they will develop. Within the Church's modern history at least, opinions on this issue have ranged widely.

Some feel the youth are indeed called by virtue of association with and training in the ways of God. Others, however, question

know the responsibilities, expectations and type of approach toward children God wants parents and the Church to have.

Placing This Question in Its Larger Context

It is important to place this question first within the context of God's overall plan for humanity. When God created the first humans, He offered them access to the tree of life. This tree symbolized having access to God's Holy Spirit and potentially receiving eternal life (Genesis 3:22; Revelation 22:14). Other scriptures reveal that the Holy Spirit imparts the mind of God and is concurrently the power and essence of God and "earnest" (or down payment) of eternal life (2 Timothy 1:7; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14).

Instead of choosing this tree, our first parents chose the symbol of human self-determination, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and were subsequently driven from the Garden of Eden. God restricted Adam, Eve and their offspring from any further access to the tree of life (Genesis 2 and 3).

In His plan to eventually replace Satan's rule over the earth with His own government, God has been "calling" and "choosing" selected individuals and training them for leadership in His future Kingdom.

to bring people to eternal life. God determined and planned from the beginning to call people to become "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). The final step, yet to come, is to become glorified as Christ is. Verse 30 does not imply that everyone who is called becomes justified and glorified. Rather, Paul was explaining the sequential steps in the salvation process—being called by God precedes becoming justified.

Peter cautioned the saints to "make your call and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). Here the word "call" comes from a similar Greek word, *klesis*, meaning "a calling,...[it] is always used in the N.T. of that calling the origin, nature and destiny of which are heavenly (the idea of invitation being implied); it is used especially of God's invitation to man to accept the benefits of salvation" (ibid.).

While this definition seems to imply a false concept of "going to heaven," it still recognizes that this calling is heavenly, that is, from God. "Election" comes from *ekloge* meaning "a picking out, selection (Eng., eclogue), then, that which is chosen" (ibid., "Elect, Elected, Election").

Jesus stated in the parable of the wedding feast, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). Here the word is *kletos* and

means "called, invited...used, (a) of the call of the Gospel, Matt. 20:16; 22:14" (ibid., "Call, Called, Calling"). "Chosen" comes from *eklektos*: "signifies chosen out, select" (ibid., "Choice, Chosen, Chosen").

Eklektos is used 23 times in the New Testament. The King James Version translates it "elect" 16 times and "chosen" 7 times.

Christ used the words "called" and "invited" nearly interchangeably in this parable (verses 1-14) about those summoned to a wedding. The concept of invitation is particularly important because it carries the notion that the invitees are welcomed and their presence is desired, but that they have a choice in how they will reply.

God calls—invites, if you will—many people; each one's response determines whether he or she becomes chosen, part of the elect. The parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23) illustrates the differing reactions among the many called. Some do not give God's truth an opportunity to take root and quickly let go of it. Others start responding but when facing opposition quickly give up. Others, fruitful at first, later make poor choices and become unfruitful. Some, though, bear good fruit that endures to the end.

In John 6:44 Christ said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him..." (see also verse 65). The Greek

word for "draws," *helko*, refers to "dragging, pulling or attracting" (ibid., "Draw.") God the Father is responsible for initiating the actions in one's life that will ultimately bring him or her to follow Christ. Without God's direct and miraculous intervention, no one can pursue His truth and Kingdom. But notice again, Christ did not say that everyone whom the Father draws chooses to come to Him.

Christ also showed that a difference exists between the time when God's Spirit is "with" one, and the time when it is "in" one. In John 14:15-17, Christ addressed the disciples before His crucifixion, prior to the giving of His Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Referring to that time when God's Spirit would (future tense) come and be in them, He said, "But you know [it], for [it] dwells with you and will be in you."

God was affecting their lives through the influence of His Spirit, but they had not yet received it as an indwelling presence. A few weeks later, as Acts 2 shows, they learned what it meant to be imbued with the Holy Spirit and saw its association with baptism.

Calling necessarily precedes baptism; and for those who are called, the Holy Spirit will be working with them. However, being called does not equate to actually receiving the Holy Spirit. That takes place after baptism with the laying on of hands.

God calls many people; each one's response determines whether he or she becomes chosen, part of the elect.

the use of the term "called," wondering if it implies that youth who do not respond to God now may be forfeiting their only opportunity to come to Him.

Additionally, many members with grown children who did not stay in the Church feel guilty, wondering if with better training their children would have remained faithful. Others believe parents are neutral in this matter and that it is God's choice alone whether to call the children.

When we don't know whether our children are called now, our conversations will reflect this with phrases such as, "I don't know whether God will call my child or not" and "Since our children are not called now, we can't expect too much out of them." When children hear these kinds of statements, they often feel it doesn't matter which way they choose.

A biblically based answer to this question is needed in order to

Those who are given His Spirit and who remain faithful to Him will receive eternal spirit life at the return of Jesus Christ.

What It Means to Be "Called"

Romans 8:30 states, "Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

The Greek word here translated "called" is *kaleo*, "derived from the root kal-, whence Eng. 'call' and 'clamor' . . . is used (a) with a personal object, to call anyone, invite, summon, e.g., Matt. 20:8; 25:14; it is used particularly of the Divine call to partake of the blessings of redemption, e.g., Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Thess. 2:12; Heb. 9:15" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, "Call, Called, Calling").

Here Paul describes the process or sequence of events God uses





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reign over Judah at the age of 8, and as a teenager, “in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David” (2 Chronicles 34:3).

The evangelist Timothy is an excellent example of a child growing up instructed in God’s way of life. Paul told him to “continue in the things which you have learned” and further remarked that “from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures” (2 Timothy 3:14-15).

It was his mother who taught him, as her mother had taught her—“when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also” (2 Timothy 1:5). Eunice could not have known, in Timothy’s childhood, that he would become a minister of God, but she obviously taught him with

special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:4-6).

The Old Covenant God made with Israel did not include the promise of the Holy Spirit, as the New Covenant does today. But even without the indwelling of His Spirit in most people, God had spiritual expectations of the parents and children. Note the following scriptures: “And teach them to your children and your grandchildren...and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children” (Deuteronomy 4:9-10).

“That you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson” (Deuteronomy 6:2).

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

“When your son asks you in

dren would live that godly way, and would in turn teach the next generation the same truths. This generation-to-generation process was a vital key in perpetuating the promises of the Old Covenant.

God made a covenant with Abraham saying, “And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” And God said to Abraham: “As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations” (Genesis 17:7-9).

Interestingly, of all the areas of Abraham’s obedience, God stressed one particular issue:

“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD” (Genesis 18:19). God looked not only upon Abraham, but included his children with an expectation that Abraham would pass on to them the knowledge and practice of His ways.

Should one be surprised that God would be involved in the spiritual lives of children? Not at all. Indeed, through observing His actions throughout the Old Testament, particularly with the nation of Israel, one sees the value and importance He places on young people.

the expectation he would learn, understand and practice God’s truth.

Other scriptures amply illustrate that young people can understand spiritual concepts. The Proverbs were written “to give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion” (Proverbs 1:4). The father’s goal in teaching his son the laws of God is to help the son internalize and never forget them (Proverbs 3:1-3). David wrote, “Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD” (Psalm 34:11).

Should one be surprised that God would be involved in the spiritual lives of children? Not at all. Indeed, through observing His actions throughout the Old Testament, particularly with the nation of Israel, one sees the value and importance He places on young people.

Parallels and Lesson From the Nation-Family of Israel

When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt to become His own special people, they were to learn of Him, walk with Him and represent Him to other nations. He said, “If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a

time to come, saying, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?’ then you shall say to your son: ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers. And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us” (Deuteronomy 6:20-25).

“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

God desired all parents within His special, called-out nation of Israel to diligently teach their children His truths and way. Furthermore, He expected those chil-

Abraham, “the father of us all” (Romans 4:16), set a precedent for both physical Israel and its spiritual counterpart today—the New Testament Church, which is called “a holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9) and the “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16). Galatians 3:29 adds, “And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Today the Church is a spiritual nation, a family paralleling the original Israel God called in the Old Testament. Are God’s expectations for the parents and children in the Church any less than they were for ancient Israel?

The apostle Peter confirmed this fundamental principle when he declared at the end of his powerful sermon on the Day of Pentecost:

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:38-39). **UN**

Part 2 will appear in the January United News. You can read this and other doctrinal papers in full at members.ucg.org/content/study-papers.

Before a person is baptized, he must repent, exercise faith in the sacrifice of Christ for the remission of sins and willingly choose to follow God. From these passages, we conclude that being called is an invitation that does not necessarily involve a positive response to the invitation. Those who respond to God’s calling are described in another way.

What It Means to Be “Chosen”

The Matthew 22:1-14 wedding parable prefigures Christ’s return, the resurrection of the elect and their subsequent marriage to Christ. He beckons “the called,” giving them access to this glorious opportunity; but most of them reject the invitation. God determines whom He will call, then those called must decide whether and when to accept that invitation. Those who repent and live by faith become “chosen.” *God calls whom He will, but humans decide how they will respond.*

Scriptures indicate that people are considered chosen at the time God imparts His Holy Spirit to them. Peter, speaking of God’s Spirit-filled children who comprise the Church of God, described them as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people” (1 Peter 2:9).

Romans 8:11, 16-17 and 22-23 also show that only a person who has the Spirit of God abiding within him or her is a literal child of God. Such an individual is God’s chosen—His own child.

A person whose name is written into the “Book of Life” (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8) would certainly be considered by God to be chosen.

Christ reveals in Revelation 17:14 that those saints who will rule with him are “called” and “chosen” and “faithful.” Just as people can choose to follow God, they can also choose to change their minds; and even a chosen person is not unconditionally guaranteed to be in the first resurrection.

Many scriptural warnings admonish the elect, those who have responded to God’s calling, not to throw away their extraordinary chosen status and promised salvation. Scripture does not define how many God has called; but compared to those chosen, the number is “many.” The preceding verses show the difference between being called and being chosen. This distinction should be clearly noted in determining whether or how God calls children.

Can a Child Be Called?

Children can, and should, have a certain knowledge and grasp of spiritual issues. Scriptural evidence leaves no doubt that a child can have a relationship with God. Throughout the ages many have done so.

For example, “Samuel ministered before the LORD, even as a child” (1 Samuel 2:18), and “the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the LORD and men” (verse 26). Josiah followed God from the time he began his

The Power of Patience

■ How long are we willing to wait for God? One hour? One day? Five days? Would we wait 10 days? Or is that too long to wait? How willing are we to obey Him—to do things His way?

by B.E. Bendall

Everyone in this world faces challenges and difficult decisions, and the women in the Church of God are no exception. We face things like where to work, who to marry, whether to marry, what to buy, when to move, where to move, what to do, what to say.

One of the most difficult aspects of life is making wise decisions. Sometimes when the stresses of life hit us and we think we're not getting an answer to our prayers fast enough, we choose to take things into our own hands instead of waiting for God to answer in His perfect time and perfect way.

Throughout the Bible are examples of those who released their grasp on their lives and allowed God to steer them where He needed them to go. Unfortunately, there are also examples of those who were too impatient and stubborn to obey God's direction in their lives.

Looking for the Official "Okay"

After the southern Kingdom of Judah went into captivity in Babylon in 586 B.C., a remnant of the people left behind in Judah decided to flee to Egypt, forcing the prophet Jeremiah, his secretary Baruch and King Zedekiah's daughters to travel with them. At Chimham, near Bethlehem, the people finally decided to ask God if He would clear their flight plan.

"All the people, from the least to the greatest, came near and said to Jeremiah the prophet, 'Please, let our petition be acceptable to you, and pray for us to the LORD your God, for all this remnant (since we are left but a few of many, as you can see), that the LORD your God may show us the way in which we should walk and the thing we should do'" (Jeremiah 42:1-3).

How many times have we done this too? We decide in advance the course of action we're going to take, head our lives in that direction and then suddenly decide to put on the brakes long enough to get God's blessing for something we've already decided to do. We don't want Him to disagree with

us—we just want Him to give us the official "okay" for what we've already decided.

That's what the Jews on their way to Egypt did. They didn't really want God to tell them to stay in Judah. They were afraid of Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar. They wanted to go somewhere they perceived was safe and secure—failing to see their only hope and security rested entirely in God's hands.

So Jeremiah prayed for them. But even though this was God's beloved prophet Jeremiah, God still took His time answering his prayer. He didn't answer in one hour or even one week.

"And it happened after ten days that the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah" (verse 7).

But God gave Jeremiah a message the Jews didn't want to hear. He told them not to flee—to stay put, that He'd take care of them and rebuild their nation.

"Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; do not be afraid of him,"

says the LORD, 'for I am with you, to save you and deliver you from his hand. And I will show you mercy, that he may have mercy on you and cause you to return to your own land... Do not go to Egypt!'" (verses 11-12, 19).

The Jews should have been thrilled! God was telling them they had nothing to worry about. He was promising to protect them so they could stay in their own land. Most people would have breathed a sigh of relief to have such a confirmation of support coming from the supreme Ruler of the universe. But they didn't, because they'd already made up their minds. They didn't really want God's input in their lives.

How many times do we do this? How many times do we find ourselves in a situation where we know God's will, know what His Word says, but choose to do things our own way rather than wait for His answer?

God knew the Jews' hearts, even as they were making the pretense of asking Jeremiah to pray for them. Jeremiah knew it too. He told them, "For you were hypocrites in your hearts when you sent me to the LORD your God, saying, 'Pray for us to the LORD our God, and according to all that the LORD your God says, so declare to us and we will do it'... But you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, or anything which He has sent you by me. Now therefore, know certainly that you shall die by the sword,



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It's not easy to wait. But God has a special blessing for us if we trust and obey Him.

by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to dwell'" (verses 20-22).

God gave the Jews 10 days to correct their attitudes—10 days to turn back to Him and decide in their hearts they were going to go where He wanted them to go, to do what He wanted them to do. He gave them 10 days to really become servants of the living God, glorifying Him in everything they did in their lives. But the power of those 10 days had no effect on that remnant of Judah. Instead, they chose to blatantly disobey Him.

"So they went to the land of Egypt, for they did not obey the voice of the LORD" (Jeremiah 43:7).

Their impatience and stubbornness eventually cost them their lives in the place they'd rationalized they'd be safe—Egypt.

Having the Faith to Wait

Six centuries later, those who formed the first Church of God were also put in a difficult situation. Their Lord and leader Jesus Christ had been arrested and crucified. At first, many of His followers went into hiding, afraid they would suffer the same fate.

But those in A.D. 31 made the right decision. For 40 days the resurrected Christ had taught them, eaten with them, encouraged them. They put aside their fears and decided to trust God with their decision making. As Christ prepared to ascend to heaven, He

told His disciples to wait for further instruction and direction.

"He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father... He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth'" (Acts 1:4, 7-8).

In total faith they waited, vowing in their hearts they would do whatever He wanted them to do, to go wherever He needed them to go.

Again, God waited 10 days to answer their prayers. But the disciples were more faithful than the ancient Jews who ignored Jeremiah's message from God. Christ's disciples didn't waver. Instead, they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (verse 14).

The disciples waited for God's direction, gladly asking Him to guide them. And that's exactly what He did. He gave them power to do His will and build His Church. At the end of 10 days, God's Spirit literally rushed in, filling them—and the house where they were praying—with His life-changing power on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:2).

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit

gave them utterance... Then those who gladly received [Peter's] word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to [the Church]" (verses 4, 41).

It's not easy to wait. But God has a special blessing for us if we trust and obey Him.

Christ said, "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

The subject of seeking God's direction and making wise decisions is a big one. Not only do we have to make sure we aren't just asking God to rubber-stamp what we want to do, but we have to make sure we don't use waiting on God as an excuse for not doing what we should ourselves.

When we pray for God's guidance, we should study His Word for that guidance, seek wise counsel, count the cost, decide and then energetically do what we believe God would have us do (Luke 14:28; Ecclesiastes 9:10). See "Wise Advice for Wise Decisions" at www.ucg.org/issues/gn29/wisedecision.htm for more on this.

Women in the Church are not immune to tough situations where it seems none of our options are what God wants us to do. Sometimes the wise choice and direction from God is just to wait. In such cases, we must decide in our hearts to wait patiently—no matter how long it takes—for His guidance and to obey His Word. Patience can be truly powerful. **UN**

B.E. Bendall is a member of the Miami, Florida, congregation.



Local Church Updates

Indianapolis Area Ladies Journey Back to the '50s

On a beautiful summer day in August, the ladies of the Indianapolis area congregations had their 2009 annual ladies' luncheon. This year attendees were instantly transported back to the 1950s as soon as they stepped through the doors.



Indianapolis ladies show off their '50s fashions at the ladies' luncheon

The inside of the building had been transformed into a '50s-style diner, complete with a replica of a jukebox, pictures of classic cars and a soda fountain. Real vinyl records served as place settings, and cute vintage sunglasses became napkin holders at each place. To add to the atmosphere, many of the ladies chose to dress in the clothing of that decade. In addition, everyone was provided with a scarf in pink, black or turquoise for a little taste of the fashion sense of the day.

As for the lunch, each attendee brought a salad to share with the group. The Indianapolis congregation provided the rolls and authentic root beer floats in old-fashioned Coca-Cola glasses.

Following the meal, local pastor Darris McNeely gave a thought-provoking presentation to the group on the topic of nostalgia. The ladies shared their memories of the 1950s, or whenever their "coming of age" was, and what they wished society still had today from that time.

He stressed that it is important to remember that, while it may be enjoyable to reminisce about what once was, the real value of looking back is to learn from the past. We must learn from our successes and our mistakes, so that we can move ahead into a positive future, armed with the knowledge that we have garnered from past experiences.

After a delicious dessert, the ladies played a game that tested their knowledge of 1950s culture, and then it was time to return to the present.

Leigh Carlson

Tampa Seniors Reveal Their Talents From Past to Present

On July 18, prior to the afternoon Sabbath service, the Tampa seniors were honored by our ladies' club with a delicious brunch prepared and served by these dear ladies. We seniors were seated at beautifully decorated tables and enjoyed very special music by our men's chorus.

Seniors were asked to bring pictures, articles and examples of their talents, crafts or hobbies from the past to present. These were very artistically displayed. Items included a

baby blanket made by a great-grandmother, beautifully crocheted table coverings and hand-drawn cards.

Two senior ladies were singers. One sang with the U.S.O. and the other sang in two different trios in her high school days. Special recipes were displayed by one who loves to cook and bake. One man displayed some of his beautiful woodwork. We also discovered that our seniors include a motorcycle rider, two softball players and a genealogist.

Additionally, we enjoyed seeing pictures of one of our ladies catching fish—one of her favorite pastimes in years gone by. There was a photo album of Feast pictures taken in York, England. We even had a man who retired from John Deere in 1986 after 30 years and then served as a consultant in the Rotary Engineering Division. Even the seniors were amazed at all of the talents and experiences.

We seniors greatly appreciated this special occasion and wish to thank the Tampa congregation for this lovely experience.

Jackie Southall

Garden Grove Enjoys a Sabbath in the Park

On the Sabbath of Oct. 24, the Garden Grove, California, congregation enjoyed Sabbath services in beautiful rustic Irvine



Six guitarists accompany hymns

Regional Park in Orange. They reserved a group area with nearly 300 feet of long picnic table space under a striking green canopy of carob trees, surrounded by towering oaks, sycamores and open grassy areas. The late October weather was perfect—about 76 degrees with just a slight breeze.

Services were scheduled for 11 a.m. with no amplified sound, but none was needed. Six of our musicians accompanied the hymns with acoustic guitars.

Our pastor Mario Seigle gave an excellent sermon on the lessons from Jonah, as the 133 brethren listened in comfortable Hawaiian or nice casual attire.

After services, the group enjoyed hamburgers and hot dogs barbecued by a few of our men, plus a potluck of side dishes and desserts. Fellowship in a relaxing natural

environment was a special treat for many of our regular Sabbath crews who were able to enjoy a day off of their regular duties with extra time to visit with others.

This special Sabbath was so successful and enjoyable that two dates have already been reserved for next May and October.

Jean Updegraff

Houston Hosts Camp for 76 Enthusiastic Preteens

The Houston, Texas, congregation hosted a successful preteen camp this past June. The camp was at maximum capacity with 76 enthusiastic campers! This year the camp had preteens all the way from Wisconsin, Florida and Arkansas, as well as staff from Georgia and Florida.

Each camper is stirred by different activities, ranging from fishing, kayaking and canoeing to archery, riflery (for the older dorms), Christian Living, swimming, music, arts and crafts and recreation.

New this year was the zip line, which became an immediate hit! After campers and staff were on top of the platform, they were securely strapped into a harness that is suspended from a cable that spans approximately 400 feet and then goes over a small ravine. It was exciting to see campers and staff who wanted to come back for another ride when they were nervous to go down it the first time.

One of the greatest benefits of preteen camp is the lifelong bond we are able to build between staff and camper. Building these lasting relationships is vital because it connects adults and youth as our young people grow up. The importance is also evidenced by the campers, as many come back to work at preteen camp when they're older. As campers met their parents at the end of camp, they were already talking about next year and how they didn't want camp to end.

It is very rewarding to hear campers come up to staff members upon leaving, as well as throughout the year, to talk about how much they enjoyed camp and how they're already looking forward to next year!

Go to www.houstonpreteencamp.com to view all of the photos of the Houston Preteen Camp along with the camp newsletter.

Elisa Hees

Bismarck Brethren Honor Centuries of Faith

On the Sabbath of Oct. 31, Bismarck-Mandan, North Dakota, congregation honored the silver-haired. Our seniors' accumulated years of service to God add up to centuries of faith. They have much wisdom about big and small things that affect our everyday lives. Time spent with the grandparents of our Church can teach us many important lessons about all manner of things in our present age. They have lived long, know the challenges of life and are also very humble and gentle.

The festivities began with a sermonette message addressing the faithful seniors who have shown their dedication through many years of service in God's way. It was followed by a sermon emphasizing the need to grow close to one another through fellowship and to remain faithful until the end of our lives.

After church services, the Bismarck young adults, teens and children, who make up the Youth Council, went to work serving a turkey dinner to the seniors. Each Youth



A Houston preteen camper races down the zip line

Council member was assigned to wait on one table each and the younger teens served rolls at dinner and cake and ice cream for dessert. It was a truly delightful evening of food, festivities and fellowship.

Digging deeper into the wisdom of these precious people of our congregations, we find they love our youth. The youth, in turn, gain a wonderful mentor and a good friend when they develop a relationship with an older person. The parents of the youth can gain such great assistance from their wisdom as well. By seeking the help of an elderly member of the congregation, parents gain understanding in child rear-



Burt Daly with granddaughter Amber Schulz

ing and patience as their children grow, make mistakes and achieve great victories as well.

One of the couples commented, "We should do this again next month!"

Pam Redline

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

Lanrik and Carrie Kester are happy to announce the birth of twin daughters on June 25, 2009, at 5:10 and 5:11 p.m. Courtney Megan weighed 4 pounds 6



Courtney and Caitlyn Kester

ounces and was 18 inches long, and her sister, Caitlyn Larie, weighed 4 pounds 6 ounces and was 17 inches long. Courtney and Caitlyn are the first children of Lanrik and Carrie, who attend the Elmira, New York, congregation. Grandparents are Wayne and Penney Kester of the Buffalo, New York, congregation.

Kirk and Kristine Talbott of Austin, Texas, are happy to announce the birth of their fifth child, Elise Ferren Talbott. Elise was born on Aug. 23, 2009, at 6:42 a.m. She weighed 7 pounds 9 ounces



Elise Talbott

and was 19 inches in length. Her siblings are happy for her arrival and can't wait for her to get big enough to play with. Grandparents Jean Talbott of Texas and Richard and Marty Scholz of Massachusetts are thrilled to have another granddaughter to love.

Rudy and Judy Rangel of the Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregation are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, Edie Sabina Rangel.

Edie was born on July 29, 2009, and has brought pure joy and happiness into her family's lives ever since.

Edie is blessed with doting grandparents Patrick and Joanne Read of



Edie Rangel

the Kitchener, Ontario, congregation and Rudy and Carolyn Rangel of the Fairview Heights, Illinois, congregation.

Edie loves to smile! And even though she still isn't quite sure yet what to think of Mr. Owl Pal (pictured here with her), she loves all toys that play music and glow.

Most of the time we wonder what we could have possibly done to be blessed with such a beautiful baby. Praise be to God for the wonderful miracle of life!

Alan and Montse (Baez) Warrington of Menifee, California, were blessed with a new member of their family, Adalia Allegra. She was born on Nov. 1, 2008 at 12:01 a.m., weighing 6 pounds 6 ounces. Both grandparents from Chicago, Illinois, and Puebla City, Mexico,



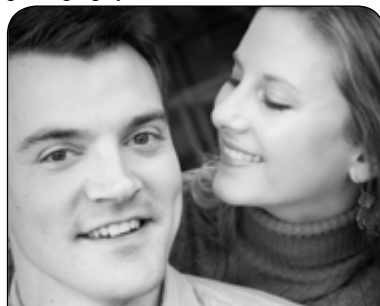
Adalia Warrington

flew in to celebrate her birth. Adalia's older brother Jordan is delighted to have a sister he can hug and play with. The Warrington family currently attends the Redlands, California, congregation.

Engagements

Barry and Janie Childers of Shelbyville, Tennessee, and Matthew and Diana Zollner of Millstadt, Illinois, are thrilled to announce the engagement of their children, Laura Beth and Brandon.

Brandon is currently employed with St. Louis University where he is also working towards his MBA. Laura Beth works as a freelance photographer and photography assistant, while also teach-



Brandon Zollner and Laura Beth Childers

ing exercise classes part-time at a local gym. Both are very quickly becoming wedding planners extraordinaire!

A Jan. 31, 2010, wedding is planned in Nashville, Tennessee, and afterwards the couple plans to reside in O'Fallon, Illinois.

The entire Vreeland family of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Chicago, Illinois, and Hal and Linda Henderson of Cleveland, Ohio, are overjoyed to announce the engagement of their children Rachel Vreeland and Alex Henderson on July 15, 2009.

Alex and Rachel have known each other for eight years, first meeting as

staff members at Camp Buckeye in Ohio. They began talking as friends while Rachel was nearing the end of her ABC year and eventually started dating shortly after her graduation in 2007.



Alex Henderson and Rachel Vreeland

Rachel is currently finishing her last year at Hillsdale College for a degree in finance while Alex is pursuing his degree in business at Eastern Michigan University. They are currently attending the Ann Arbor, Michigan, congregation. The couple has plans for a beautiful summer wedding in August of 2010.

Weddings

Jill Fertig and Edward Rueschman were married on Nov. 1, 2009, by



Jill and Edward Rueschman

John Foster in Kent, Ohio. The couple will reside in Uniontown at Edward's home.

Warner and Merri Ellen Gens of Dayton, Ohio, are happy to announce the marriage of their daughter Christina Morgan Gens to Eric Michael de Campos, son of Jorge and Kathy de Campos of Cincinnati. The ceremony was performed by the groom's father at the senior citizen's hall in Fairborn, Ohio. The maid of honor



Eric and Christina de Campos

was Dena Gens (sister of bride) and the best man was Stephen de Campos (brother of groom). The ring

bearer was Caleb Hooser (nephew of groom) and the flower girl was Caitlyn Borrageiro (cousin of bride). Around 150 close friends and family from as far as Texas, California and South Africa attended the wedding.

After the ceremony, the married couple departed under a moonlit sky by horse and carriage to their honeymoon destination. A hot-air balloon ride was part of the honeymoon. The couple now resides in Goshen, east of Cincinnati.

On Aug. 16 Lexie Lysyshyn and Kevin Spahich were married in the beautiful town of Shellbrook, Saskatchewan. The couple intended to have an outdoor ceremony at



Lexie and Kevin Spahich

their new farm, complete with their horses and a carriage. Unfortunately the ceremony had to be moved due to a rainstorm. However the hall was beautifully decorated and served as a great back-up venue. Though it was cool and wet outside, inside it was warm and lively. Members of the wedding party traveled from as far away as Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta to join the couple on their special day. After the wedding, the couple moved to Thunder Bay where Kevin will complete his bachelor of education degree next year at Lakehead University before heading back to the farm.

Anniversaries

Otha and Mary Lee Peeples celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on Oct. 22. They were married



Mary Lee and Otha Peeples

in San Angelo, Texas. The Peeples are members of the Coleman, Texas, congregation although they are no longer able to attend services. Mary Lee was baptized in 1972. Otha was baptized in 1973. They have lived in Texas all their lives except for a six-month period during World War II. Otha has spent his life working on

ranches and was an accomplished trick rider. He did the famous Roman jumps, riding on two horses at once. The Peeples have two children, Howard Peeples and Carole Warlick, and one grandson, Sam Peeples, deceased. They appreciate all the cards, gifts and flowers that they received.

Gene and Linda Maxwell of the Henderson, Kentucky, congregation, were surprised after services on



Gene and Linda Maxwell

Sept. 12 with a finger-food potluck and 50th anniversary cake. Their actual anniversary was on Oct. 3, which also happened to be the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Their friends decided to celebrate the wonderful occasion early.

Gayle and Betty Trehus were married 50 years on Aug. 1, 2009. They were baptized in 1972 by Robert



Betty and Gayle Trehus

Jones. They are members of the Little Falls, Minnesota, congregation and live on a small farm near Litchfield, where they raise goats, turkeys, chickens and other assorted critters. God has blessed them with five children and 17 grandchildren.

Bob and Erika Schmid of the Garden Grove, California, congregation celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on the Sabbath



Erika and Bob Schmid

of Aug. 29, 2009. The congregation presented them with a book

containing shared memories written by brethren from near and far. Bob and Erika have attended with the same congregation since they joined the Church of God in 1975. That evening their children, David Schmid and Karen and Kelly Dack, arranged a get-together with family, friends and brethren to celebrate the occasion with a dinner, cake and dance. A picture montage of their life and 50 years of marriage was a highlight and enjoyed by all.

Obituaries

Kitty Brisco, 85, of Irving, Texas, died April 2, 2009, after a yearlong illness.

Kitty and her husband, Wiley, were baptized into God's Church in January of 1957. For almost a quarter of a century they zealously served God's people in the Dallas and Fort Worth area. Wiley was ordained a local elder April 15, 1976. Wiley suffered a fatal heart attack in 1981 after returning home from Tucson, Arizona, where they had attended the Feast of Tabernacles.

Kitty is survived by her daughter, Hallace Banks, who attends the Big Sandy, Texas, congregation, son-in-law Terry Banks, five grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren and sister Masie Wheat. She was preceded in death by her husband, Wiley D. Brisco; her parents, Clifton and Prudence Brown; and sister Lorraine Sipe. Kitty was also survived by her daughter, Cyndi Brock, of the Sherman, Texas, congregation, who died four months after her.

Kitty continued her dedication and service to God's people with her generous hospitality, baking bread for Passover services, intercessory prayers, sending cards and letters and telephoning those who needed comfort and encouragement. Kitty Brisco was much loved and will be greatly missed by family and friends.

Madge Deyton, 87, of Johnson City, Tennessee, died Feb. 7, 2009, at the Christian Care Center of John-



Madge Deyton

son City. She was born in Burnsville, North Carolina, April 29, 1921, the daughter of Delbert and Sarah Etta Deyton. She grew up during the Great Depression in a loving family of three brothers and two sisters. They lost their father when she was only 5 years old.

After graduating from Clearmont High School, she continued her edu-

cation and became a beautician. Madge then worked at the American Enka in Asheville, North Carolina. She was an excellent worker and held several different jobs with the company. She retired as an inspector after 35 years with the company.

In 1999 Madge and her sister Ethel were baptized by David Dobson and began attending the Kingsport, Tennessee, congregation where their sister Macie had been attending since 1959.

Madge loved music, gardening and traveling with her sisters. Her favorite Feast site was Jekyll Island, Georgia. Her green thumb produced many beautiful flowers and plants over the years! She had a very good sense of humor and provided many years of companionship to her sisters.

Graveside services were held at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Enka, North Carolina. The service was performed by Eric Evans. Her favorite hymn, "How Great Thou Art," was sung by her nephews, Dean and Darrell Renfro, and grandniece, Sherri Roth. Her grandnephew Jack Renfro accompanied them on the guitar.

Madge is survived by her two sisters, Ethel Clubb and Macie Renfro. She was preceded in death by her three brothers.

Lois Shirley Evans died on Oct. 19, 2008. Lois experienced a mas-



Lois Evans

sive cerebral hemorrhage just after breaking her fast on the Day of Atonement in Jefferson, Georgia.

Lois was blessed with just over 77 years of life and resided in Hoschton, Georgia. She loved her "fellow laborers" and regularly attended the Jefferson congregation.

Lois moved from the Tampa, Florida, area in 2004 to be near her son Eric and his family after her husband, Evan George Evans, passed away in 1997 and her father, Rudolph Valdemar Anderson, passed away in 2003. Until his death, Rudy Anderson had been a member of the Tampa congregation.

Lois was a longtime, faithful member and servant, called into the Church of God while living in St. Clair Shores, Michigan. It was *The Plain Truth* magazine—passed on from a neighbor—and the radio broadcast, *The World Tomorrow*, that led to Lois's decision to be baptized by the Detroit area church pastor, Edward Smith, in 1970.

Lois contributed to the church through transporting members to church services on the Sabbath and

Tribute: Adghuel "Lee" Christopher

Adghuel "Lee" Christopher, 88, of Vienna, West Virginia, died on Aug. 8, 2009, at St. Joseph's Hospital. She was a longtime member of God's Church.

She was born in Polkton, North Carolina, on Oct. 8, 1920, and was the daughter of the late Henry Duncan and Minnie Abigail Walters Nance. She had worked for the FBI in the fingerprinting department and was a seamstress for several area businesses. She served as a deaconess in the Parkersburg, West Virginia, area. Her husband, Kenneth Christopher, served as an elder. She was loved and admired by many.

Holy Days. She also served by providing vocal solos and choral performances, hosting home Bible studies and through her Christian example to many.

Lois was preceded in death by her husband, Evan George Evans. She is survived by her only daughter, Christine Ruth Williams of Fenton, Michigan; her sons, David Rudolph Evans and Eric George (Jeannie) Evans; and grandchildren, Jeremy, Bobby, Jonathan, Jacqueline, Zachary, Jaime, Rebecca, Amanda and Sarah; and great-grandchild Gabriel.

The family expresses appreciation to the Jefferson, Georgia, congregation, Bruce Gore and his wife, Phyllis, and very special thanks to Wayne and Jo Ann Eisman, who treated Mom as their own.

Wes Hoover died unexpectedly on Sabbath morning, Aug. 22, 2009, at his home in Benton City, Washington.

He was a loving father of six children, including two sons who preceded him in death. He is survived by his devoted wife of 59 years, Barbara; son, Wes; daughters, Billie, Elizabeth and Bambi; 19 grandchildren; and 35 great-grandchildren.

Wes was born Nov. 15, 1929, and was baptized along with his wife in



Wes Hoover

July of 1984 in Spokane, Washington, by Roger Foster.

Wes' field of work was reinforcing steel in heavy construction. He worked across the entire United States all his life (most often with his wife in tow).

Besides the Church, Bible study and giving sermonettes, his two passions were his garden and fishing. He is greatly missed.

Survivors include her two daughters, Nancy (Ron) Kelley of Mocksville, North Carolina, and Alice "Ali" (Craig) Harper of Davisville, West Virginia; four grandchildren, Scott (Nicci) Kelley, Jennifer (Chad) Messerly, Angie (Jim) McFarland and Zach Harper. Ron Kelley and his wife, Nancy, serve in the Ashville, Hickory and Greensboro, North Carolina, congregations. Also surviving are four great-grandchildren, Terrance Kelley, Madison Kelley, Ryleigh Kelley and Abby Messerly.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Kenneth William Christopher, in 2000; two infant sons; four brothers; and two sisters. Lee and her



Lee Christopher

husband served for 40 years in the Wheeling and Parkersburg, West Virginia, congregations as well as the Portsmouth, Chilli-cothe and Marietta, Ohio, congregations.

Born Dec. 31, 1932, in Everett, Washington, Alice Day died on Nov. 3, 2009, in Priest River, Idaho.

Alice is survived by her loving husband of 58 years, Hamilton Day; sons, Warren (Teresa) Day, Arthur (Ida) Day, Jonathon (Jill) Day and Mark; daughters, Cindy (Eddie) Johann, Yvonne (Joseph) Huang, Anita (Tim) Larson, LaVerne Day and son-in-law, Shane Reichlin; 16 grandchildren, Bradley, Brian, Brenda, Jacob, Tammy, Jennifer, Jeremy, Angela, Samantha, Laith,



Alice Day

Coltin, Paden, Alexander, Oliver, Julianne, Madeline and Jonathan.

Alice lived life to the fullest and enriched the lives of all who had the pleasure of knowing her. She was a loving, caring, giving (to a fault), happy and beautiful person who will be greatly missed by her friends and family.

Alice was a dedicated member of the United Church of God.

William D. Gordon, 84, of the Knoxville, Tennessee, congregation died on Aug. 11, 2009, of complications from surgery. Bill was buried with full military honors at the Tennessee Veteran's Cemetery. Eric Evans, pastor of the Knoxville, Tennessee, congregation officiated at the funeral service.

Bill was born on Nov. 19, 1924, in Crestline, Kansas. After graduating from high school at the age of 17, he enlisted in the Navy where he served for four years during World War II.

Bill and his wife, Helen, were both baptized in 1958, and both attended Ambassador College in Pasadena,

California. Bill served as a ministerial trainee in Bakersfield, California, until he was given his first pastorate in Anchorage, Alaska, in 1970. He also pastored four other churches: Duluth, Minnesota; Joplin, Missouri; Independence, Kansas; and Cookeville, Tennessee, before retiring in 1991.

Bill was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 54 years, Helen. He is survived by his son and



William Gordon

daughter-in-law, Jason and Kay Gordon, two grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, three sisters and many members of the Church family whose lives he has influenced greatly.

Bill had a passion for the Word of God that was inspiring to many. He loved to teach the truths of God, and though he retired from the active ministry in 1991, he continued to teach up until his death. He has run and finished his race. He now awaits the words: "Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of the Lord."

Bill will be deeply missed by many, but we are thankful for the time we were able to spend with him and for what we have learned from him.

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 *UnitedNews*.

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

Feast of Tabernacles

Attendance: 12,180

Reported offering: \$643,014.92

This represents a 7.8 percent increase in attendance and a 0.8 percent increase in the reported offering compared to the figures for the Feast of Tabernacles 2008.

Last Great Day

Attendance: 10,993

Reported offering: \$748,170.47

This represents a 0.4 percent decrease in attendance and a 1.1 percent increase in the reported offering compared to the figures for the Last Great Day 2008.

Gerald Seelig

GN Commentaries Reach One-Year Mark

Nov. 10 marked the first anniversary of filming *GN* Video Commentaries. Over the course of the year we have posted 195 *GN* Video Commentaries, which have been viewed 211,929 times on YouTube. They were also posted on www.GNmagazine.org, where the total page views for the year was 218,713.

Aaron Booth

Daytona Beach to Be Feast Site in 2010

Daytona Beach, Florida, will replace Jekyll Island, Georgia, as a Feast site in 2010 due to the scheduled demolition of the convention center on Jekyll Island in June 2010.

While the Jekyll Island Authority plans to erect a temporary meeting space on Jekyll Island for large conventions such as ours, the temporary facility would not be ready until only a few months prior to the Feast. Sometimes there are construction delays that can adversely affect completion dates. As well, the temporary meeting space will not have parking lots adjacent to the facility, which would make attendees have to park at remote lots and be shuttled to the structure.

Given these issues, the Festival planning team looked for alternatives in the southeastern part of the United States.

The only location in this region meeting our needs (the specific dates of the Feast as well as favorably priced meeting space and housing for our members) was Daytona Beach.

While Daytona Beach and its recently refurbished 2,500-seat Peabody Auditorium are available for our use in 2010, we will not be able to go back to Daytona Beach the following year due to a conflict with their schedule. We anticipate returning to Jekyll Island in 2011, using the temporary meeting space, and continuing from 2012 forward to use the new Jekyll Island Convention Center after it is completed.



What's New on the Web?

■ Web Page for Booklets Redesigned

Go to www.ucg.org/booklets to find these and other recently updated and Web-optimized booklets:

- *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest*
- *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?*

■ UCG Web Presence Expands

On Nov. 13, Internet managing editor Aaron Booth reported the following exciting stats for UCG Web activity:

7,684 total Facebook Fans.

1,625 total Twitter Followers.

90 Bible FAQs posted.

231,306 Bible FAQs views.

456 videos posted on YouTube.

915,141 video views on YouTube.

Since Daytona Beach will be a one-year site, we anticipate a full-capacity attendance.

David Treyig

Northwest Weekend, Dec. 25-27

Come join us! The Portland, Oregon, congregation is hosting the Annual Northwest Weekend, Friday, Dec. 25,

through Sunday, Dec. 27. This year's schedule is highlighted by ABC presenters Jim Franks and Dave Register who will teach ABC seminars on Friday and Saturday.

Teens will enjoy a Bible study on Sabbath morning and a teen dance with the theme "A Walk in the Clouds" on Saturday night. There will be basketball and volleyball games on Sunday.

Each year NWW creates memories that last a lifetime! Come join us—we can't wait to serve you! Download the schedule and sign up online at <http://nww.ucgpdx.org>.

Rob Slocum

Cincinnati Dance Weekend, Feb. 5-7

The Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregation will host the Winter Family Dance Weekend on Feb. 5-7. We will have a Bible study and dessert social on Friday evening and a dance Saturday night. A group activity on Sunday morning may be planned for those interested. For more information or to register, please contact Amy Stephens at CincyWD@fuse.net. We hope to see you there!

Amy Stephens

Attention Skiers and Snowboarders!

The Salt Lake City, Utah, congregation will again host its annual Winter Ski Weekend, held over the Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, Jan. 16-18, 2010.

Come and enjoy warm, family-oriented fellowship; a beautiful, brisk environment; and experience some of the greatest snow on earth at historic Park City, Utah.

The weekend begins on Sabbath morning with two seminars. Light refreshments will be served between sessions. Attendees are responsible for lunch, but many local restaurants are within 2 to 3 miles. Sabbath services will begin at 3 p.m. followed by a potluck meal provided by the Church.

77 e-mail campaigns (*This Is the Way*, UCG Weekly Update, *GN* Newsletter, *WNP* E-news) sent.

168,712 clicks to our Web sites generated by e-mail campaigns.

80,278 visits to UCG weekly commentary pages.

Featured Link

■ Members' Web Site members.ucg.org

Go to the members' Web site to listen to sermons, find a Sabbath webcast, check the UCG events calendar, read a study paper and more.

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



Saturday evening we will have a family dance for everyone.

All events will be held at the same location as in previous years, the Cottontree Inn in North Salt City, 1030 North 400 East, North Salt Lake, UT. For reservations call (800) 662-6886.

Information about reservations and rates is available on the members' Web site activity calendar, members.ucg.org. For more information and/or to register, please contact Jon Pinelli, pastor of the Salt Lake City congregation, at jon_pinelli@ucg.org.

Thanks for your interest! We look forward to seeing you in January!

Jon Pinelli

Calendar of Events

Dec. 7-10: Council of Elders meetings.
Dec. 22-26: Winter Family Weekend, Louisville, Kentucky.

Dec. 25-27: Northwest Weekend, Vancouver, Washington, <http://nww.ucgpdx.org>.

Dec. 28, 2009-Jan. 3, 2010: Winter Camp, galeblack@comcast.net.

Jan. 15-17: Women's Enrichment Weekend, "Uniquely You—Uniquely Me," Garden Grove, California, garden-grove.ucg.org.

Feb. 5-7: Family Dance Weekend, Cincinnati, East, Ohio (CincyWD@fuse.net).

Feb. 12-15: Midwest Presidents' Day Family Weekend, Branson, Missouri.

Feb. 13: *WNP* Seminar, Seattle, Washington.

Feb. 22-25: Council of Elders meetings.

March 20: Regional Teen Formal, Dallas, Texas.

April 23-25: Spokane Women's Educational Weekend, "Beacons of Hope."

April 24: *WNP* Seminar, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

May 2-3: General Conference of Elders.

May 4-6: Council of Elders meetings.

June 7-11: ABC Continuing Education Seminar, Cincinnati, Ohio.



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

Is ABC in Your Future?

Thinking about your future plans in life? What about enhancing your spiritual condition? Want to connect with friends in a way that will last a lifetime? Why not think about attending Ambassador Bible Center?



ABC is an intensive nine-month educational program offered and supported by United Church God that takes you on a journey through the Bible with an emphasis on developing godly character. If you ever wanted to know what it is like to have an educational experience based on your beliefs, then ABC is for you.

Join the Class of 2011 on your journey through the Word of God and enhance your spiritual life through greater understanding of how to live God's way of life.

Applications are being accepted at this time. To apply, please go to abc.ucg.org and download an application. We look forward to hearing from you!

Gary Antion