

# UNITED NEWS

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## news AT A GLANCE

### ABC to Host Annual Cincinnati Continuing Education Week

The faculty and administration are pleased to announce the topics for this year's Continuing Education Seminars at the ABC Lecture hall in Cincinnati, Ohio. The dates for the Continuing Education Seminars are June 6-9. We have only four days of seminars this year to allow for time to return home for Pentecost on the Sunday following (June 12). The line-up of speakers includes: President Dennis Luker, Member and Ministerial Services Operations Manager Victor Kubik and faculty member Chris Rowland, Treasurer and Financial Affairs Manager Aaron Dean, and ABC faculty members Gary Antion, Frank McCrady and Randy Stiver.

The topics for this year's Continuing Education Seminars are:

**Critical Chapters from the Book of Acts** by Gary Antion. Chapter 2, the coming of the Holy Spirit; Chapter 9, the conversion of Saul; Chapter 10, the conversion of the Gentiles; Chapter 15, the Church conference about circumcision. All four chapters will be expounded upon with an emphasis on how we need to become more like the early Church in our attitudes and conduct.

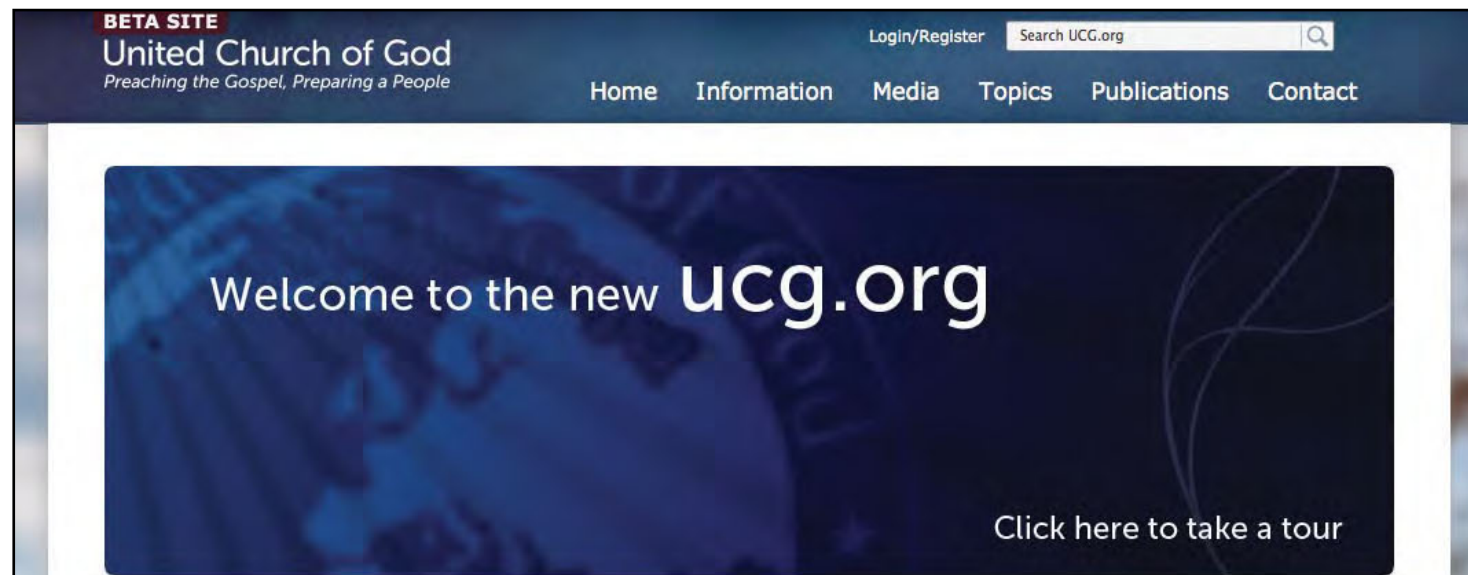
**Helping Others as Part of Our Christian Mission (Part I)** by Victor Kubik. It will be in two sessions. The first will focus on the biblical aspects of helping others and the other on the practical side of things—what should we do and how can it be done?

**What Part Does Relief and Developmental Work for the Poor Hold in the Mission of the Church? (Part II)** by Victor Kubik. What does the Bible tell us? What is our responsibility and how can it be done within the work of the United Church of God?

**History and Lessons from the Last 50 Years** by Aaron Dean. Why does the

See "News at a Glance," page 14

## Make Connections with New UCG.org



The new home page is constantly updating with the newest material the church has produced. Besides the archival utility of the site, however, is the social aspect, which makes it easy to reach out to your friends and those new to the truth alike.

■ Besides the wealth of information on the new website, there is the opportunity to connect with others.

by Tom Disher

Last year around the Feast of Tabernacles my grandmother died. We were very close—growing up, I spent a lot

of time at her house. She was 90 years old and lived a very full life, but it's always hard to lose a loved one.

At her funeral service the number of people who showed up to encourage my mom and me at the funeral home overwhelmed me. Our Church family showed up to support us at a time we needed them the most. This is what we are to do as brethren. "When we get together, I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to

be encouraged by yours" (Romans 1:12, New Living Translation). I was encouraged by the outpouring of compassion and kind words by the people who showed up. I was blessed to have these connections through the Church—the one thing that links all of us together.

So what does this have to do with the new website launch?

See "Website," page 5

## Fresh Faces at the Home Office

■ The home office staff would like to present two new full-time hires in the Media and Communications Services Department—Mitchell Moss and Milan "Nick" Bižić!

by Sabrina Clore

**New United News editor**

Mitchell Moss was hired as Associate Editor of the *United News*, and he collaborates closely with Nick Bižić in the publication process. Mr. Moss officially began his new responsibilities on Feb. 25.

His primary responsibility is to choose or assign and then edit articles, news items, announcements and local church updates and all the other miscellaneous graphs, statistics and photos that go into each issue of the *United News*. All items for publication are proofread and then, if necessary, passed through doctrinal review. Mr. Moss lays

See "Fresh Faces," page 4



Milan Bižić



Mitchell Moss

all these items out to create a well-designed and neat final product ten times per year.

His other duties include laying out *World News and Prophecy* in collaboration with that publication's manag-



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### BY THE NUMBERS

**3,598**

Highest Monthly Response to  
Beyond Today to date





## U.S. Minister Visits Brethren in Brazil For Days of Unleavened Bread

by Jorge de Campos

Jorge de Campos, pastor of Portugal, Brazil, and two congregations in the United States (Lexington and Louisville, KY), completed his second pastoral visit to Brazil during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

His first stop was Maloca de Moscow, where he baptized four members and conducted Passover services with 12 people present.

Maloca de Moscow is approximately 35 miles east of Boa Vista in the far north of Brazil, bordering with English Guyana. The indigenous people there are from the Wapixana tribe. The brethren have an agricultural background, and one of them owns a few heads of cattle.

Sabbath services before the Passover had an attendance of 31 people, including a few visitors. Services were held on the property of Bonifácio Gomes Mateus because all the assets previously built by United brethren went to another religious organization. The total number of United members in Maloca is 25 (which includes one member studying in Manaus). The brethren are keen on building a new place to worship God near Bonifácio's home with their own funds. They want to have it completed by the Feast of Tabernacles this year.

Mr. de Campos discussed with them their needs and identified that their first need was that of a chainsaw, so they could open ground for a plantation. This need was catered for by donations from UCG brethren in Portugal.

Their second most important need was to start a program for them to raise cattle in their region. Mr. de Campos appointed Bonifácio Gomes Mateus to coordinate this project, as he has skills in this area. The project was kick-started by providing some startup funds with assistance from the United brethren in Portugal. In the next few weeks they will be purchasing 6 or 7 calves (about one year old), including one "producer." We hope to report in the next *United News* the status of this start-up project and how brethren can further sponsor this project. Their goal is to have 20 heads of cattle, which will be a gift from United for the benefit of all United brethren in the region.

Another need is to purchase a tractor to work the land, as they do all by hand or by renting equipment. This will be reported in the future. Mr. de Campos asked them about seeds for their plantation. They said that they did not need further assistance with seed as the Brazilian government has an assistance program in place, including land testing to determine



Members pose for a photo on the First Day of Unleavened Bread in Maloca de Moscow

what areas are most suitable for different crops. Because Mr. de Campos had a small donation for seeds from a member during Jorge's last visit to Dallas, he encouraged them to build a large vegetable garden and to use the seed money for seeds for their vegetable area. The ladies were most excited about that idea.

During Mr. de Campos's stay, he conducted a training session for the adults about basic principles regarding sermonette preparation, opening and closing prayers, children's training and Bible studies and correct proceedings during regular services and also during the Passover service. The brethren were most grateful as they never had such training sessions before. The baptized brethren in Maloca chose Benedito Gomes da Silva as their coordinator to organize services. They also chose Suelly Inácio Gomes as their Treasurer. Mr. de Campos also appointed three leaders to conduct youth Bible studies during the Sabbath. Ana Helena is to look after the little ones, Carlos da Silva over the middle aged ones and Bonifácio Mateus over the older group.

Mr. de Campos also helped them with funds for a few Bibles and to get material for the young ones, such as paper and crayons to use for Sabbath school.

Many times the conversations became very emotional when everyone considered how God intervened for them in many ways. One most notable way was how God opened a door for one of their young ladies, Verônica Gomes, to contact the home office via the Webmaster, so that they could have continued support from the home office. This was a very emotional issue with them, because they had been told by some of those who left United (and who were our previous points of contact), that they would be left in a lurch with no way for them to contact the home

office and vice-versa. The brethren were literally in tears because of how God opened this door through Verônica, who was baptized during this trip. She is a fine young lady that needs our prayers for God's protection. We can thank God for opening doors that we would not be able to open ourselves.

Mr. de Campos then visited members in Rio de Janeiro and Montes Claros. The Last Day of Unleavened Bread was held in Montes Claros with seven people attending.

These scattered brethren have many challenges, living in a society with many pagan religious pressures. We need to pray for God's protection to these members and children.

Two of the ladies there understand English, but the rest only Portuguese. Spanish is difficult for them, as the previous minister visited them would have to speak to them in English, and then it would be translated to Portuguese, as they could not understand Spanish. Any brethren that may be prepared to rough it (camp) during the Feast of Tabernacles in Maloca should contact Mr. de Campos. They will surely have a lovely time with a very humble and teachable group of people. **UN**



Verônica Gomes

## INTERNATIONAL news

### UCG Ad in *The Daily Telegraph* Attracts Responses

An ad primarily for *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy* booklet appeared on the front page of *The Daily Telegraph* on Monday, March 21. To date around 130 responses have been received. We believe that the actual number of direct responses to an ad is not the whole story, as there is the value of people becoming familiar with our name, as well as the fact that some may go to our website and perhaps order other things. Some will undoubtedly just read online the prophecy booklets that are offered without us hearing from them. A print ad reaches an audience that is different from the Internet audience.

Jan Schroeder

### UCG Isle of Man Annual General Meeting

United Church of God-Isle of Man held its annual general meeting following the Sabbath service on March 19, when the pastor, David Fenney, was able to be present. The existing officers, David Payne, chairman, Laura Rowles, secretary, and Eloise Howard, treasurer, were all reappointed for a further year. It was agreed to continue with Google ads and also to advertise in *Manx Tails*, a free magazine with island-wide distribution. The possibility of a new meeting hall, to meet the congregation's expanding needs, was also discussed.

Jan Schroeder

### London Social a Success

The London congregation's first social was a roaring success. Numbers were swelled by visitors from the Gloucester, Bricket Wood and Paddock Wood congregations. Following the service we enjoyed our traditional tea and coffee and arranged tables for the meal. The cuisine was of exceptional variety, quantity and quality, with dishes representing many parts of the world. Following the arrival of further visitors the total of people was around 60. The room was suitably dec-

orated with national flags and appropriate background music playing to help us enjoy both the food and the fellowship. All activities went well, including the quizzes and entertainment, and the atmosphere was one of lighthearted fun. It ended too quickly and we had to scramble to clear the room by 9:30 p.m.

Jan Schroeder

### Canadian Office Reports Beyond Today Responses

The United Church of God television program, *Beyond Today*, has been on the air in Canada for almost five years. During that time we've had over 16,350 responses for an average of 63.4 per week. Nearly one third of all the responses have come in our fifth year and nine of the 10 programs with the highest number of responses came during the same period. We've reached over 9,200 new people since the program began.

Ed van Pelt

### LifeNets Reports on Japan Relief Efforts

Victor Kubik reported that LifeNets has raised approximately \$10,000 in donations to go toward disaster relief in Japan. The money will be used to help students orphaned by the disaster to continue in their studies.

Mitchell Moss

### Guatemala Campers Send Hand-Written Thanks

Campers who attended the camp in Chimaltenango, Guatemala, sent in hand-written notes of thanks to the office. Some translated excerpts:

"Thank you for the best camp ever!!!" -Helen Gómez

"This camp was a most beautiful experience and it would not have been possible without God's blessing in the first place ... We are very thankful. Greetings to all from San Marcos, Guatemala." -Yuri Gómez

"My sincere thanks to all of you for the help you gave us, the young people. We hope God will give you many blessings for what you are doing for us. Enormously grateful." -Maily de León

Mitchell Moss



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# Profile: Steven Britt

Sometimes the hardest thing to achieve is what you know how to do. When you lack confidence it can be trying to meet goals completely within the realm of your ability. “Even though people know what to do, they are scared to do it,” said Steven Britt of Raleigh, NC, who worked as a tutor, teaching math to college students. Steven explains, “The first step in tutoring is to teach them what to do. The second step is teaching them to not be afraid to do it.” The spiritual parallel of how God tutors us is not lost on Steven, who has been working toward his spiritual goal of living the truth, which God has revealed to him.

At age 16, Steven met his future wife, Danielle. She was the one who introduced the concept of God and His Church to Steven. “Following God became an unconscious goal—I didn’t dwell on it, I just started doing whatever I found that the Bible said I should be doing,” said Steven. This new goal caused a lot of tension between him and his

family. When he started to keep the Sabbath, he could no longer work at his dad’s car lot, which led to arguments and disagreements with his parents. He made a new goal: to work toward being accepted by his parents no matter what his religious beliefs were.

His goal of following Jesus Christ was amplified when his dad was diagnosed with brain cancer. After finding out the seriousness of the cancer, Steven explained how he would pray with his eyes closed while walking, peeking every so often to keep from stumbling: “I couldn’t think about anything other than my dad’s mortality.”

After difficulties encountered in one of his dad’s surgeries, Steven feared his father wouldn’t be able to see him and Danielle get married. The surgeon explained that the probability of his father living another year was very low. Miraculously however, his father lived for another three and a half years—he lived to see Steven and Danielle marry in May 2007.



Steven and Danielle Britt

His father’s sickness and death led Steven to grow in his commitment to God. “In the meantime, as I drew closer to God, I was also able to draw closer to my parents. God comforted me by teaching me His plan for all of mankind—including my dad,” said Ste-

ven. “There were times when I was terrified of what would happen, but God gave me the perspective that I needed to endure. God has truly allowed for all things to work together for good in my life.” Danielle and Steven were baptized in April 2011. **UN**

## FORWARD! Now is Not the Time



**VICTOR KUBIK**  
 Ministerial and Member Services

We often pride ourselves on the fact we have lots of knowledge—even foreknowledge—of what God is and will be doing in the realm of mankind. We have glimpses into the identity of the Beast, the False Prophet, the King of the North and the King of the South. We know that things will get really bad before the end of this age.

However it grates on me when at a time of great calamity, terrorism, natural disaster or loss of life that some are quick to pontificate, “There it is! Prophecy is being fulfilled!” Lively discussion ensues as speculation of what exactly in the Bible this particular catastrophe might refer to while we simultaneously watch televised reports of horror, misery and grief in the lives of thousands and even millions of people.

The book of Ecclesiastes tells us that there is a time for all things. There is an appropriate time to proclaim. There is a time to mourn and weep. As Christians we need to be sensitive to how we act and react.

The prophets of old, while bold in proclaiming the downfall of Israel and other nations because of their sins, were compassionate and grieving when the predicted consequences actually occurred.



Jeremiah—the prophet who predicted Jerusalem’s downfall—also wrote the five-chapter book of Lamentations, which speaks of the horror and grief of the fulfillment of his other prophecies. Lamentations is not a judgmental diatribe stating, “See, I told you so.” No, it is an outpouring of compassion for the victims of the ruthless invasion: “My eye overflows with water, because the comforter, who should restore my life, is far from me... They have heard that I sigh, but no one comforts me” (Lamentations 1:16, 21).

I’m happy to see after the devastating March 11 earthquake and tsunami in Japan that so many in the Church reached out in prayer and compassion to the Japanese people. This was not a time to proclaim that God has come to “shake the earth terribly” and other earthquake prognostications. This was a time for compassion. I have a good friend in Japan who has written to me voluminously about the human

toll of the tragedy. The Church has taken a collection through LifeNets and the Good Works Program to help a few of the hundreds of thousands affected. This was the right thing to do at this time.

An important aspect of our Christianity is to know when to proclaim and when to be like Jesus, who knowing that Jerusalem would be destroyed, wept because of what was going to happen: “He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes’” (Luke 19:41-42).

A Christian is not noted for his intellectual prowess—it’s his love that carries meaning. “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2). **UN**



# The Jordan Volunteers: The Race Before Us

by Darren Henke

The Jordan Project has been a wonderful opportunity. It has also been a long procession of firsts in my life: first time overseas, first time living in a foreign country, first time working with special needs children and, as of April 8th, my first marathon. A big part of the Jordan Project is leaving a legacy, both for the people we serve here and also for future volunteers. So it was that I decided to follow in the footsteps (literally) of last year's volunteers by competing in the Dead Sea Marathon.

Webster's Online defines a marathon specifically as "a footrace run on an open course usually of 26 miles 385

yards (42.2 kilometers)" and generally as "something (as an event, activity, or session) characterized by great length or concentrated effort." Indeed the marathon can be seen as a type of the struggle of life—especially for the Christian life. Running as an analogy for the Christian life has been popular since the earliest times—phrases like, "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1) are very much a part of the Christian tradition.

The bible often uses types and symbols to help us better understand spiritual concepts, and this is a great example. The marathon—like life—is a long and often arduous journey. Like life, it is not a sprint and can only be com-

pleted through much effort. The trials and hardships experienced during it cannot be predicted ahead of time; it requires planning and timing, patience and endurance.

## The Shorts of Truth

This analogy works well in the general sense, but perhaps even better in a more specific sense. Specifically, the marathon symbolizes any major trial that stretches us to the limits of our endurance. The keys to finishing this figurative marathon are the same as those for a real one: preparation and determination. The first part of this is having and maintaining the proper equipment. For a runner, these are shirt, shorts and a trusty pair of shoes. Modifying the list found in Ephesians 6 for the running analogy, our essential equipment might be the shorts of truth, the shirt of righteousness and the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Another crucial factor is training. Runners diligently follow a program of small runs, building up gradually to race day. Likewise, Christians build the character and endurance to overcome large trials through the small trials and setbacks of life. Making the most out of these small, often daily tests strengthens us spiritually so we can confidently endure the larger ones that come along less frequently. An additional aspect is maintaining proper nutrition, both before

and during the race. For a Christian, this is a healthy diet of the Word of God and staying hydrated with the Holy Spirit. Without these, our strength doesn't last

## ONLINE

[www.uycjordan10.blogspot.com](http://www.uycjordan10.blogspot.com)

**READ: Blog posts and updates from the volunteers in Jordan**

long, and we fall far short of reaching our goal.

Our goal in the specific sense is to successfully overcome our trials, becoming ever stronger through them. And in the general sense, our goal is nothing less than eternal life in the very family of God. Concerning this goal, notice what the apostle Paul says: "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown" (1 Corinthians 9:24-25).

## Always Overcome

As every trial in life has its end, so too did my marathon: after hours of pounding the pavement in the heat, I ran across the finish line. My marathon here in Jordan was a trying but rewarding experience, made possible because of careful and committed preparation. Likewise, our Christian marathons can be successful and rewarding if we prepare and dedicate ourselves to the task of overcoming. As we do this, let us all echo Paul when he said, "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). **UN**



**Youth Corps Jordan volunteer** Darren Henke runs in the Dead Sea Marathon in the sweltering heat

Continued from "Fresh Faces," page 1

ing editor, Tom Robinson; collecting, editing and laying out all the articles, Feast site descriptions and other miscellaneous information that goes into the annual *Festival Planning Brochure*; and designing the annual *United Youth Camp* magazine.

Raised in rural Berne, Indiana, Mr. Moss grew up in a conservative environment where the Amish ride their buggies on the road as cars whiz by. He went on to obtain a bachelor's degree in Graphic Arts Management from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. There, he was trained in the entire printing process—graphic design, file preparation, plate making, press operation, binding and other finishing procedures. He gained further experience working in the printing and publishing industries where he did design work, computer work and project management work under print deadlines with clients both large and small.

In 2009 he made three large leaps simultaneously by moving out of his parents' house, getting married and attending ABC. His wife, Dana (formerly Zannetti) is an ABC class of 2006 alumna who works as a freelance photographer.

When asked for his thoughts on his new position, Mr. Moss said, "I'm thrilled that I get to produce a product in my daily work that isn't just a focus-grouped, heavily marketed, targeted piece of advertising or manufacturing, but is instead a journal where members of the Body of Christ can glean uplifting and educational information. I intend to continue the hard work previous editors have done in making the *United News* a thoughtful and edifying news source for Church members."

## New Publications Proofreader

Nick Bižić began his new responsibilities on February 25 as publications

proofreader. His responsibilities are to proofread and edit all of the main publications (*Good News*, *United News*, *Vertical Thought*, *World News and Prophecy*), as well as the Festival and camp brochures, Web content, coworker and member letters and personal correspondence responses.

Mr. Bižić was born in Wheeling, West Virginia, and grew up in eastern Ohio, about an hour from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His parents, Chuck and Judy, are both from Ohio, and he has two older sisters, Mandy and Heidi, as well as eight nieces and nephews. He was homeschooled until graduation at 16 in order to begin studying at university. Graduating with an associate's degree in computer science, he went on to attend ABC in 2006. Afterward, he attended Ohio University and graduated in 2010 with a bachelor's of science in communication. Mr. Bižić is engaged to Sarah Bates from Califor-

nia Hot Springs, California. Miss Bates is an ABC class of 2007 alumna and works at the home office as international mail clerk. They plan to marry on June 5.

Mr. Bižić's official first day on the job was February 25. When asked what he is looking forward to the most in his new position, he replied, "Doing the work of God with His people." He added, "I'm loving getting to forge a stronger bond with God the Father, Jesus Christ and all who are known by His name. It's thrilling to know that your work contributes to the ultimate purpose for the universe and sobering to know that any and all personal efforts amount to absolutely nothing without God's blessing and approval."

Mr. Moss and Mr. Bižić are working side by side with all the other talented home office staff in producing high-quality material that will inspire our members and proclaim the good news! **UN**



Continued from "Connections," page 1

We need to make connections. In fact, God tells us that we must make connections! "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near" (Hebrews 10:25 NLT).

The Media Department, Information Technology Department and Ministerial and Member Services Department have worked together on the new website to help you make connections with other brethren, with people new to God's truth and most importantly to God.

## Connecting With Other Brethren

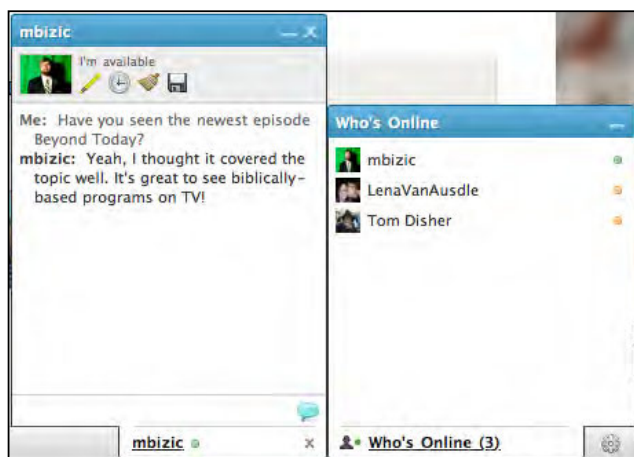
### Adding Friends

The new UCG.org allows you to make connections with your friends without having to worry about "Facebook stalkers" or companies selling your e-mail address. After registering for an account you can search for people you know and add them as friends.

After you have requested their friendship and they have confirmed that they know you, it opens up much more functionality for you.

### Chat

You can chat with anyone that you have added as a friend in real time. This will help you stay connected with your friends throughout the week instead of just seeing them one time a week at church. It's a great way to encourage each other and share things you have found that might be useful to someone



You can chat with your friends and develop a relationship with somebody new

going through a trial.

### Messaging

If you would rather swap messages in a less instant way, you can send a private message to your friends. Only those you have added as friends can send private messages to you. When you receive a private message the site will notify you that you have a message waiting. After reading the message you can reply and wait for a response from your friend.

## Connecting With Users Who Are Not Members

One of the most important parts of the new site is the ability to connect with people who are new to God's truth. These people probably don't have a Church family like we do to support them and encourage them in their times of need. Our websites



Make a comment on articles you like or contribute to a conversation in progress. You can help others come to a better understanding or see a new perspective.

average over 3.5 million visitors every year—3.5 million people who have an opportunity to hear God's Word. We have the unique opportunity to connect with these people and show them what a member of the Church is really like—to truly let our light shine.

## Making Constructive And Helpful Comments

One way you can connect with these users is to leave constructive and loving comments, even if you disagree with something or someone. Every article, blog post, video, etc., will now have a place to post comments.

Everybody will be able to see your comments, and you will be able to see what everyone else thinks about the item. This is a great way to spark discussion and enhance the experience of others who come across that item.

Everyone will also be able to click on your name and become friends with you. It's up to the entire Church to make a good impression on these 3.5 million people who are closely watching what we say and how we're saying it. (See "How to respond to comments").

### Adding People As Your Friend

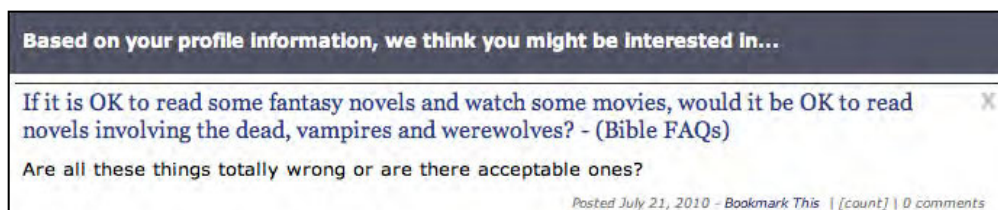
If you see a comment from someone you feel like you could connect with, you are able to request them as a friend, which will open up chat and messaging capability. What a powerful tool! You can connect with people who have real questions about God's truth and begin to form a relationship with them.

## Connecting With God

Of course, connecting with God is the most important part of our lives. One of the goals we had with the new site is connecting people with content that is useful to them. The best way for a user to do this is to fill out a profile. When you fill out a profile you can provide information to the site that is used to recommend articles that will be most interesting or relevant for you. For instance, if you are a single man who likes surfing and hiking, you would be more likely to connect with articles that draw analogies from surfing and hiking.

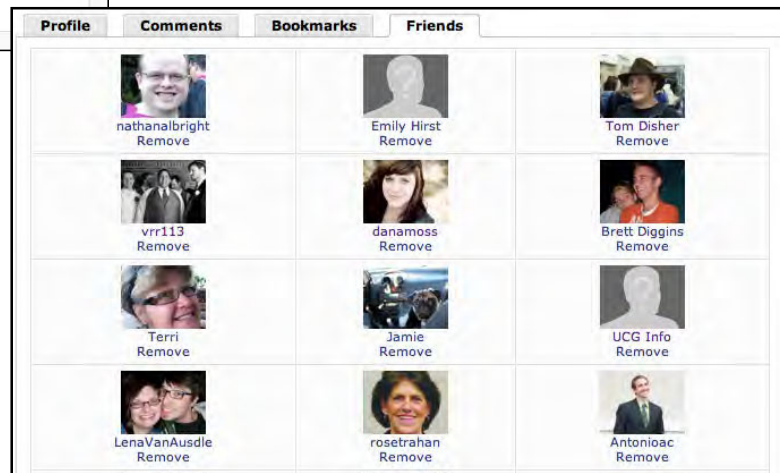
The new site also has enhanced search features, topical indexes and many other features that will help you study God's Word easily and effectively.

## How Can I Start Making Connections?



The site will make recommendations for reading or watching based on what information you put in your profile.

You can start making connections today by heading to the site and registering for an account. Browse the site and find an article you'd like to comment on. Find an old friend and reconnect with them. You can start making connections and helping others in their journey toward the Kingdom of God today at the new UCG.org! **UN**



Adding a person as a friend is a good start to developing a relationship with them or keeping up with friends you've known for years.

## How to respond to comments

- 1. Answer kindly.** Peter's epistle instructs us to "be prepared to give an answer...for the hope that you have," but to make sure we always do this "with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15, NIV).
- 2. Don't return anger for anger.** You may have to answer people who are angry or provocative, but always remember that a "soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).
- 3. Don't use "churchspeak."** Just as Paul became "all things to all men" (1 Corinthians 9:22), we must be sure that we use language our audience will easily understand and identify with. Examples of churchspeak are "the world tomorrow," "second" or "third resurrection" and "deleavening."
- 4. Don't be afraid to admit you don't know.** No one but God has perfect knowledge, so if you can't answer a question right away, let the person know you will try to find the answer. Seek out the answer from God's Word and then answer the question. "Cry out for discernment...and...you will...find the knowledge of God" (Proverbs 2:3-5).
- 5. Pray for wisdom.** In your daily prayers, specifically ask for wisdom to know how to best answer questions about God's truth. We all lack wisdom at times, so let us "ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach," and we will receive His wisdom (James 1:5).
- 6. Link to existing material.** Many times the best answer can come in the form of an article or sermon from the website's archives. Plus, material on the website has already gone through doctrinal review and approval. After all, "in a multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 24:6).
- 7. Know your Bible.** The best preparation for answering biblical questions is to know your Bible well! Make sure Bible study is a part of your everyday life, because "[God's] word is truth" (John 17:17).



## Why Executive Sessions?

■ Members and ministers sometimes feel uncomfortable with executive sessions the Council of Elders conducts and want to know what they are all about.

by **Bob Berendt**

During the last few years there seem to have been a growing number of “executive sessions” in the Council of Elders meetings. Transparency has been one of the stated objectives of UCGIA right from the start, and the Council has made many efforts to keep everyone as informed as possible. So why does the Council have executive sessions that are not reported on publicly? Are they necessary? What are they about? In short, the primary objective of an executive session is to safeguard the name, reputation and privacy of anyone who is involved in the affairs of the Church.

I would like to answer the question as to why we sometimes have executive sessions and what an executive session is from the point of view of a Church pastor of more than 40 years and a Council member for more than four years.

### Biblical Examples

First of all, let’s look at biblical examples of private discussions akin to our modern “executive sessions.” Jesus often took some or all of the 12 disciples aside and spoke to them privately. It was not sinister on Jesus’ part, it’s just that there were things He wanted to explain to them since they would form the building blocks of the Church (Matthew 10:1; 19:28; 20:17; 26:20).

It would be reasonable to call these “executive sessions.” These were moments when Jesus wanted to discuss things with the 12 that He didn’t want all the many hundreds following Him to also hear. In some of these instances, Jesus gave them instructions about the power they would receive, or He told them of His impending death or of the 12 thrones that they would sit upon judging the 12 Tribes of Israel.

It is easy to see why Jesus would draw the 12 aside and speak only to them; there were some matters only they needed to know about at the time. There are some details of certain matters those of us who aren’t on the Council (either as members or ministers) can’t know yet for legitimate reasons. But we on the Council are always aware that we face a stricter judgment because we’re in that position. We work out our own individual salvation just as everybody in the Church is called to do. So while we should all respect the offices of leadership and those placed in them, we should also trust in Jesus Christ with faith that He will guide His Church.

### Personal Privacy

All of us, member and minister alike, remember incidents in our lives where we needed reassurance that what we were about to say to or ask somebody else would not be shared. We may have said something like, “this is for your ears only.”

As a pastor I have often reassured members who come to me with personal problems that I would not discuss that with anyone. I have carefully kept that promise. If I felt the need to have an additional perspective, I would first come back and get the permission of the person (obviously in cases of child abuse or

the danger of a pedophile, even a pastor would encourage the person to get help and to assist them in getting that help).

Baptism counseling is another example where strict privacy is absolutely observed. Those counseling for baptism may discuss sins of the past or deep inner battles (such as gambling problems, financial error, homosexuality, alcoholism, lust, extreme jealousy, guilt from adultery or very disturbing thoughts). These are all very, very private areas in our lives that must be held in the greatest confidence.

There have been occasions where a person has asked that even the wife of the minister or a fellow minister not attend the meeting. That is how deep and personal some discussions can be between a minister and member. Personal issues, therefore, demand closed doors. We all understand that need and have probably expected that confidence from others.

The Council of Elders is made up of 12 men who have oversight of the affairs of the Church. Ever since UCGIA started, executive sessions have been called for any discussion that involves another person and that may cross the line of being sensitive. Once again, that is the objective of an executive session—to safeguard the name, reputation and privacy of anyone the Council must talk about who is involved in the affairs of the Church.

Several clear examples come to mind. When a man is recommended for ordination, certain parts of his life are discussed. None of us would want our lives to be openly discussed in a forum open to the entire Church or the world. Sometimes the Council, for a valid reason, must decide that the man should not be ordained or that ordination should be delayed.

The same is true when a minister or employee may be under consideration for a particular responsibility or for removal from a position and perhaps from the Church because of the activity he or she is or has been engaged in. Any discipline is discussed behind closed

doors—such as discussing items like the church budget, policies that may involve people, legal issues and updates and other such items.

We strive to be sure there is a good reason before we go into executive session. It is not done lightly or frivolously and the current Council is looking for ways to be as open as possible. There is nothing sinister about the sessions. We are not plotting and scheming anything, and our prayer is that we are pleasing to God in the manner in which we serve His people. By using executive sessions, the Council is simply acting to protect the private issues of people for whom we make decisions.

### Freedom from Misinterpretation

There are also a few other sessions that need to be private because the Council members need the opportunity to openly express themselves with no fear of being misunderstood. At times we need to discuss items freely and frankly. Subjects like the budget, the Church’s income or

*All of us, member and minister alike, remember incidents in our lives where we needed reassurance that what we were about to say to or ask somebody else would not be shared.*

exactly how we preach the gospel and use the media may involve some discussions that need to be kept private. Decisions come after much discussion and only areas that are sensitive or could be misunderstood are held privately.

It’s important to note that in nearly every single case, the decisions that come out of executive sessions become public later. It is the discussion and deliberation leading up to those decisions that stays private. Exceptions to that are if the Council declines to ordain a man or other related human relations situations. This is what human relations employees specialize in and what executive sessions are all about.

The members of the Council take their responsibilities seriously and seek to humble themselves before God at every meeting. We all know that we answer to Him and to Jesus Christ for the heavy responsibility we have been given. The General Conference of Elders has entrusted the Council to do the right thing. We have tried to do

*In short, the objective of an executive session is to safeguard the name, reputation and privacy of anyone who is involved in the affairs of the Church.*

doors. We want to help the person, rescue them and restore them if at all possible. To be absolutely clear, we would not cover up sin in a case like this, but we would try to assess the magnitude of the problem and what should be done about it.

Executive sessions increased in recent months as a crisis situation developed. It was necessary for the Council to spend much time in these sessions while attempting to avert division. The details of many of these sessions must remain private.

Executive sessions are not called without reason. The Council desires transparency and goes into executive session only because there are things to discuss that could involve people or decisions that are sensitive. Ever since UCGIA started, the Council of Elders has held executive sessions for the above reasons and oth-

that with all our heart.

It is an awesome responsibility to serve God in making some of these decisions. The Council has a strong sense of fear and respect for our task in the Body of Christ—the Church. We ask all members to believe our sincerity and to support the work we do. That is the only way the Church can move ahead and serve God in a manner that is pleasing to Him.

The Council of Elders is there for the members and the ministry—that is, for the whole Church. We are here as servants of the Church. We serve God and His Son and God’s people who make up the General Conference of Elders and the membership. Thank you for the faith and trust you place in the men who have been given the responsibility of serving in this manner. They appreciate your respect and your prayers for the work they do. **UN**



# Treasure DIGEST

## Which Type of Sheep Are You?

In our modern society, most people have never been around or worked with sheep. Those who are familiar with sheep, however, can tell you there are two basic sheep personalities: those which understand the protection of their shepherd and will follow him anywhere, and those that are rebellious, wild and just plain dumb. A common saying among sheep raisers is that it seems some sheep wake up and look for ways to die.

With this basic understanding of the two personalities that sheep tend to have, you must ask yourself: "Which type of sheep am I?"

It is well known that the Bible uses the sheep as a teaching tool for how to live life. Jesus is portrayed as a shepherd and we are His sheep. He said that His sheep know His voice and will follow Him where He leads them. It's obvious that this is the type of sheep we want to be. John 10 illustrates the type of shepherd Jesus Christ is: one who does everything He can for His sheep. He calls them by name and leads them (verse 3), He gives them pasture (verse 9) and He even laid down His life for them (verse 11). Christ makes it quite clear that He is the good shepherd and we know that He, just as the Father, will not go back on His promises.

Hosea 4:16 gives an example of the type of sheep we don't want to be: "For Israel is stubborn like a stubborn calf [or sheep]; Now the LORD will let them

forage like a lamb in open country." Out of their stubbornness, they refused to follow God, even though God made great promises to them if they would follow His ways (Deuteronomy 4:1). Unfortunately they did not heed God's instruction and therefore reaped the consequences of the curse spelled out in the Law of Moses (Daniel 9:8-11).

So you have a choice to make: Will you choose to hear and follow your Shepherd, knowing that everything He does is for our benefit? Or will you wake up looking for ways to die by following after the lust of the world? He knows your name, protects you from danger and He gave His life so that you can ultimately have yours in the kingdom of God. Jesus Christ has promised you eternal life, but the choice is yours to make.

*Brent Martin  
ABC class of 2011 graduate*

## Spiritual Maturity: Are You Like a Butterfly?

Have you ever been to a butterfly conservatory? If you have, you may have even had the butterflies land on you. It is an experience that thrills young and old alike.

One species that I learned to identify when I was a teenager is the monarch butterfly. I even raised some from caterpillars until they underwent metamorphosis and emerged as butterflies.

They are amazing creatures. By studying the monarch butterfly you can learn a lesson that can be applied to your spiritual life to help you reach spiritual maturity.

The lesson you learn is that eating the proper food gives you protection.

The monarch caterpillar eats only the milkweed plant, which provides it with



www.photos.com

## Caption Contest

### Winner!

"Blow harder, Shofar you haven't even cracked an egg!"

William Douglas, Houston, TX, congregation



### Runner-Up!

"Hey fellas, the egg wants to know if you can play Billy Courington's new #1 hit,

"Let Me Down Easy."

Robert Curry, Colorado Springs, CO, congregation

- Have a clever caption for the cartoon below?
- Send it to your local pastor and ask him to forward it to *United News*. You can also e-mail it to UN@ucg.org. We may feature your caption in an upcoming *United News*!







lasting protection. An alkaloid compound in the milkweed makes the butterfly noxious to birds that try to eat it. Any bird that tries to eat this butterfly becomes sick and learns to stay away from the monarch.

As a caterpillar, it is a voracious eater—eagerly devouring the milkweed. At first it can eat only the most tender part of the plant. Then as it grows it is able to digest the whole plant.

Just as God gave the monarch butterfly special food for its protection, God also

provides spiritual food that serves to protect you from spiritual harm. By obeying God's laws and observing His Sabbaths and Holy Days, you are given spiritual protection that has lasting value. By studying the Bible, rightly dividing and digesting the Word of Truth, you receive spiritual nourishment that will last for all eternity.

Like the monarch butterfly, which at first can eat only the most tender part of the milkweed plant, you start out drinking the milk of God's Word. Then as you

mature you are able to digest the meat.

When you digest the Word of God and have it securely written in your heart, our spiritual enemy, that roaring lion Satan the devil, gets a bad taste in his mouth and flees. To him, God's Word and way of life is noxious. He can't stand to be around those who are protected by studying and living by God's Word.

However, you can fall into a trap when you don't study all of God's Word. Just as some varieties of milkweed do not contain the proper amount of the alka-

loid substance that protects the monarch, you can be left vulnerable when you limit yourself to studying only a part of God's Word.

The Church of God is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). You can't pick one particular section of Scripture to dwell on to the exclusion of other parts of the Bible.

All Scripture is given for reproof, correction and for doctrine (2 Timothy 3-16)—you can't pick and choose. If you do not study all of God's Word, you will not be fully protected. You must put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-13).

By studying the monarch butterfly, we can learn that eating the food that God has provided for us gives us the spiritual protection we need. You must not neglect any part of God's Word if you are to grow to perfection and be accepted into the Kingdom of God.

*Bill Douglas*

*Houston, Texas, congregation*

## Share Your Treasures!

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

Children's  
Corner



## Spot the Difference

There are 9 differences between the two pictures of Israel in the wilderness below. Can you spot them all?



Last issue's puzzle answers:  
**Why does God save his people?**

- Covenant loyalty (Deuteronomy 7:9, 12)
- Loving kindness (Psalm 119:159)
- Mercy (Psalm 59:17)
- Love (Jeremiah 31:3)

Bonus answer: *hesed*





# “The Good Steward of God’s Blessings: Sharing Our Time, Talent and Treasure”

■ In the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties, you can make a difference.

by Debbie Baker

You’re sitting on the couch watching the evening news report of a devastating natural disaster overseas. Tens of thousands of hungry, exhausted, injured people have been displaced from their homes. Video footage depicts them walking for miles, carrying their children, desperately searching for food and clean water. They’ve left behind their homes, their possessions and in some cases their dead loved ones. Social safety nets that we take for granted in the developed world don’t exist now in their world.

The news anchors in the television studio comment on how tragic it is for the thousands and thousands who, by the unfortunate accident of where they happen to live, are now stripped of all their possessions and forced to start over, trying to meet their basic human needs. The report numbs you. It hardly begins to cross your mind that you wish you could do something to help those people. But of course you can’t—not in the face of such overwhelming devastation.

Then it’s dinnertime, which you enjoy with your family. You chat about your day and work on coordinating your schedules for the busy upcoming weekend. You never think about the news report again, and the images of innumerable human faces lined with intense suffering fade from your memory. You would never say so, but the forgetfulness is welcome.

We see seemingly insurmountable problems and think we are unable to make a true difference. After all if it were even possible to make a difference, surely someone else with more brains, money and time would do so. But are we truly so powerless? Do we so quickly forget who our all-powerful Father is?

The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle performed by Jesus Christ that all four gospel writers recorded (Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:31–44, Luke 9:10–17 and John 6:5–



*Even the smallest offering in the hands of God can help in the face of the mightiest tragedies.*

15). The multitudes had been following Christ, listening to His teaching and receiving His healing. The disciples wanted Jesus to dismiss the many thousands to go find food, but Christ wanted the disciples to take care of the people themselves. Given the circumstances, the task was impossible. There was no way to quickly purchase food for the five thousand men plus thousands more women and children who had gathered, and the disciples quite reasonably said so. “But He [Christ] said to them, ‘How many loaves do you have? Go and see’” (Mark 6:38). In John 6:8–9 we read that a boy responded by offering his five barley loaves and two small fish to the disciples. Understandably the disciples commented, “What are they among so many?” This small amount of food was woefully inadequate for the situation. However Jesus multiplied the offering, abundantly meeting the needs of the people.

### The Take-Away

What can we learn from this youth who responded to the disciple’s call for resources and the

miracle Christ performed with such meager supplies?

**1.** Freely give what you have to God. We are stewards, not owners, of all that is in our control (including our time, talent and treasure).

Surely others had food on that day in the Palestinian countryside. But when the disciples searched for resources upon Christ’s request to do the impossible, it was this boy who responded. He gave all he had and was thereby given the most excellent blessing of seeing God multiply his small offering to meet a staggering need. God could have had Jesus Christ turn stones into bread for the multitude, but instead He delighted in taking an offering and multiplying it for the benefit of the giver.

God will have His work accomplished, but He wants to do it through us.

**2.** Trust God to meet the need. We do not measure our own resources against the problem—we measure God’s resources against the problem.

Christ did not ask about the magnitude of the problem or the lack of resources—He asked, “What do you have to offer?” What looked vastly insufficient to human eyes became more than enough in God’s hands. Our human contribution to God’s work is marginal at best—even the contributions from the wealthiest, the most talented or even the most righteous among men. But God can take our offering—be it our time, talent or treasure—and multiply it to meet the need. It is only when we face a task impossible by human standards that we can stand aside and let God perform a miracle. So rejoice in impossible problems—you will see the hand of God!

“I am weak and can do nothing” is not true humility. Too often that approach is actually a convenient cop-out that serves our laziness or selfishness. We shirk our duty yet manage to pacify our conscience. “I only have five loaves and two fish—they won’t even make a dent in this overwhelming need, so I shouldn’t even bother...” Or more commonly today, how

about, “I’m only a minimally talented musician, or speaker, or dinner host, or organizer, or conversation starter, or \_\_\_\_\_, so I won’t even bother trying to serve—someone else can do it, and they’ll do it better than I could anyway.”

True humility is knowing that on our own we are weak and can do nothing, but that through God, we can do anything He desires for us to do. And we will do anything He desires for us to do because in humility we will put all of our selfish cares behind us in order to serve God and our fellow man.

**3.** Reap such blessings that there is not room enough to receive them.

Not only did all the people following Jesus that day eat but there were twelve baskets of scraps taken up after the meal! What if the boy hadn’t offered up his meal? Perhaps he would have secreted away and quickly filled his belly, feeling vaguely uncomfortable and guilty. But instead of eating it all himself, he gave what he had to help others with no expectation of return. His offering, which in his hands could only have met the needs of a few, was then used by Christ to fill the needs of thousands of hungry people. Not only that, he also had the honor of being part of Jesus Christ’s miraculous care of the people.

Though others likely had food that day, they probably figured they didn’t have enough, so they didn’t give anything at all. One boy gave what little he had, and God made it more than enough. What overwhelming needs do you see around you—in your family, your community and your world? What resources do you have that you can put in God’s able hands? What miraculous impact could come about because of your small offering? Our meager resources will never yield more when we clutch them tightly to our chest—instead they will wilt, wither and even poison us with anxiety. But the same God-given resources have infinite potential to help others if handed freely back to God. If we generously sow our time, talent and treasure, we will reap a bountiful harvest of blessing for ourselves and for others. **UN**

*Debbie Baker is a member in the Fort Worth, Texas, congregation.*



# The Shared Vision

■ God the Father and Jesus Christ have shared with us their vision. What is that vision and how do we take part in it?

by Gerald Seelig

In the very first chapter of the Bible, God said “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). This is the shared vision of God the Father and the Lord of the Old Testament (Yahweh), the One who became Jesus Christ in the New Testament. That shared vision is to have a family—in Their realm of eternity. But that vision required sacrifice and it required service—a servant’s heart, which can only come by and through the great love of God or *agape* as it is called in the Greek.

God the Father and Jesus Christ still have that shared vision today. We see it expressed in the letter to the Hebrews: “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory...” (Hebrews 2:10). But what is even greater is that They (the Father and the Son) have shared this vision with us, as members of the United Church of God, an International Association, and all truly converted Christians. Do we realize how

awesome it is that the Father and Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, are sharing Their tremendous vision with us? They want us to be a part of Their shared vision. That is to be our shared vision as well—“bringing many sons to glory.” That is what we are and must be about.

How do we realize that vision? It is through a mission—a mission Jesus Christ Himself gave to us. We probably know it by heart: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded

disciples and us that we are to love one another just as He loved us (John 13:34). The gospel of God’s Kingdom that we are to teach to the world is all about that love we are to have for God (and Jesus Christ) as well as for all humanity. But there is also a warning. We clearly see that warning Jesus Christ preached in Matthew chapters 24 and 25. But it is a warning of what will happen to humanity for not heeding and obeying the gospel of love and peace—the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Our Father’s and our Elder Brother’s vision is also all about developing and nurturing relationships. If that is

individual part in developing and maintaining relationships.

## Doing Our Part

So what’s our part? To truly fulfill the shared vision and to accomplish the mission, Jesus Christ showed us that we have to be just like He was and still is. Christ said this in different ways, but the thrust was always the same. He summarized it when He said “...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). The night before He was bludgeoned and crucified, He stooped down and took on the role of the lowliest servant and washed His disciples’ feet.

Father in the spirit and attitude of Christ-like service.

With the attitude of pure Christ-like service, we put away pride, vanity, selfish ambition and conceit. In so doing we esteem others better than ourselves (Phil 2:3). We also seek to live peaceably with everyone (Rom. 12:18) and learn to submit ourselves to each other, as Paul wrote, “in the fear of God” (Eph 5:21). These and other qualities of being a servant and performing Christ-like service are not easy for any of us. But with the help of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and keeping that shared vision and our mission always at the front of our mind, we will each become greater and more effective servants of our Father in Heaven and of each other.

The United Church of God, an International Association, has a shared vision. We are privileged to be able to have that shared vision with our Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Let’s move forward together with Them. Step into that vision. Work toward fulfilling the great mission. Build and nurture meaningful, everlasting relationships through Christ-like service to all. There are many, many people still to bring to the wonderful glory that God the Father has for all mankind. All Christians are called to commit to this vision. The vision is there. We have work to do. **UN**

*One perfect life of the Son of God served as the debt for every imperfect human being that ever lived; but at the same time God did not remove mankind's ability to choose.*

you” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Jesus told us that His gospel would be taught in the entire world. But what is the gospel? Christ told us that we are to first love God “with all your heart, with all our soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength,” and then “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30). Jesus Christ later expressed this more deeply when He told the

Their focus, then it must be ours as well. The New Testament especially is overwhelmingly devoted to how we are to get along and live with our neighbor. That neighbor is our spouse, our parents, our children, our siblings, our boss, our employees and anyone else we come in contact with as we live our lives from day to day. The apostles Paul, John and Peter wrote volumes about our

He then told them that they were to do to each other just as He had done to them, with the same attitude of a servant and spirit of service. That spirit of service—being the lowliest servant—is not just for one night. It is an attitude—a characteristic—that we must seek to have at all times (1 John 2:6). We can only fulfill our shared vision with each other and with Jesus Christ and our Heavenly

## Comments from our readers

**These comments come from readers of The Good News magazine.**

“PLEASE keep up your good work in everything you do. The world needs it more than ever during these times.”

“Frankly speaking, I lack words to express the wonderful work you’re doing . . . Only God, and I mean only God, will reward you. Keep up the good work and don’t relent for a second.”

“I have questioned the reality of Jesus Christ, but after reading your magazine it has me focused on the truth of our Lord, and has given me great insight! Thank you for such a wonderful magazine.”

“All I can say is may God give you more resources to share and shape the body of Christ as you have shaped me.”

“I thank God for this magazine—it definitely gives me something to think about but everything is always backed up with Scripture. Thanks!”

“I always carry my copy around with me as I am totally in tune with your insight and biblical truth that you espouse. God bless all the writers and the distribution of this magazine.”

“The Good News Magazine is very helpful in terms of news/world information and biblical passages. It is very relevant to our times.”

“From the time I discovered started reading *The Good News*, I am growing more spiritually, and understanding the Bible more. May the blessing of the Lord be with you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Please—keep it coming!!”

“I am a seed that fell among thorns. But your work and magazine inspires me to pray daily for the help I need to overcome. Thank you very much and may God always be with you.”

“I love and enjoy *The Good News* magazine. I cannot imagine being without this magazine and I look forward with great joy in receiving my magazine every time. It’s indeed very informative.”





# Local Church UPDATES

## Akron and Canton Host Seniors' Luncheon

On March 6, 2011, around 20 senior members from Akron and Canton, Ohio, gathered for a soup, salad and sandwich luncheon in a bright park shelter. The fresh snowfall outside made us thankful for the four secure walls and heated interior. Beautiful floral arrangements and cheery yellow place settings made the event spring-like despite the sudden shift in weather.

The menu included gallons of three popular soups: butternut squash, beef vegetable and Italian wedding soup, a long time favorite. Among the scrumptious desserts, the rich cheesecake was in high demand. Drinks included coffee as well as fresh-squeezed orange juice and lemonade, a task that kept the teen helpers well-occupied.

John Miller remarked upon the importance of older members in the congregation as valuable for their presence alone, whether or not they can physically serve. He also commented on the value of the stories the older members have to tell. Entertainment was provided by Dick Walters and his grandson, Christopher O'Brien, and included singing, guitar and a range of humorous to "Canadian" jokes.

To end the afternoon, each senior lady was presented with a bouquet of wildflowers from the decorations by one of the many congregational volunteers. The support of those non-seniors, who attended to honor the wisdom that comes with age, was impressive. The event was made a success through their dedication and effort.

*Kayla Weaner*

## Orlando Weekend Campout a Great Success

More than 120 brethren from throughout Florida and as far away as Massachusetts gathered together on March 18-20



Bill Wilson (West Palm Beach), Orlando Ramos (Miami), and Stan Braumuller (Orlando) enjoy time together at the Orlando Campout.

for the 10th Annual Orlando Church Campout. This year's campsite was the beautiful Florida Elks Youth Camp in Umatilla, Florida. Campers had their choice of sleeping in tents, cabins, or on-site motel rooms. The pleasant Florida weather helped create a perfect setting for activities such as Bible baseball for the teens, fishing, volleyball, softball, bocce ball, relay games for the children, a sing-a-long, roasting marshmallows by the fire, great fellowship and a church picnic on Sunday.

Mr. Johnnie Lambert, an elder serving in the Elmira, New York, area who also assists in Estonia and other Scandinavian countries, was the guest speaker on the Sabbath, and spoke about the meaning of sanctification and what it means to be sanctified. Whether it was for playing sports, enjoying the beautiful Florida weather, or good old-fashioned fellowshiping, there was something for everyone. The campout was a great success, and the Orlando congregation would like to invite anyone who wants to join us to "come on down" next year for a weekend of fun and fellowship.

*Dave PerMar*

## Girls Scouts Recognized for Their Care for Animals

Courtney Franke, Lucretia Puckett, and Jennifer Kellers are animal lovers and spent part of last year ensuring a small population of animals was pampered while waiting for adoption. Courtney, Lucretia and Jennifer are a part of Girl Scout Troop 2480 and chose Happy Tales Humane, a local animal shelter, as their community service project. The three Junior Girl Scouts, along with other members of their troop, began in the fall of 2009, earning the Girl Scout Bronze award. This award is given to Girl Scouts who are ages 9-11 and participate in a community service project with their troop. It is the highest award achievable for this age level.

The troop sold cookies and used the proceeds to purchase fabric to make fleece cat beds for Happy Tales Humane. It took the girls several months to complete the beds. At the completion of over 20 fluffy, colorful beds, the girls presented the volunteers at Happy Tales with the beds, and took a tour of the facility. The cats at Happy Tales, who are waiting to be adopted, have their own room in which to roam free. After the tour, the girls were able to visit and play with the cats. The girls also collected pet food and toys for donation to Happy Tales. The girls received their Bronze



Girls scouts Lucretia, Courtney, Jennifer

award, in May 2010, at a cook-out to honor them for their hard work.

Currently, Courtney and Lucretia are in the fifth grade, and Jennifer is in the fourth. All three will advance to the next level of Girl Scouts in June. Courtney, Lucretia and Jennifer attend the Nashville, Tennessee, congregation with their parents, Tim and Michele Franke, Matthew and Melissa Puckett, and Fred and Darline Kellers, respectively.

*Michele Franke*

## Church Elder Honored by Indiana Governor

Gary Nielander, a longtime elder in God's Church, was honored by Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels on March 22, 2011, for a long and notable career in economic development for the state. Governor Daniels presented Mr. Nielander with the Distinguished Hoosier Award in the state capital, Indianapolis, after his nomination by State Senator Dennis Kruse was approved.

Mr. Nielander's recent retirement from the Steuben County Economic Development Corporation marked the end of 45 years serving the state. After serving three years in the U.S. Army after high school, Mr. Nielander attended Indiana University and began working for the Indiana Department of Commerce immediately after graduation. He continued serving in various economic development roles for the state for all but five years of his extraordinary career.

Mr. Nielander's accomplishments include bringing many businesses to the various counties in Indiana that he served, having over 80 economic devel-



Gary Nielander with Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels and State Senator Dennis Kruse

opment grants that he wrote funded, and being recognized as an honorary Secretary of State in 2007.

In addition to his very distinguished

career, Mr. Nielander has served God's people faithfully since being ordained an elder in 1974. The members of the (former) Columbus, Indianapolis, and Ft. Wayne, Indiana, congregations have long enjoyed Mr. Nielander's friendly personality and wonderful sense of humor. The Ft. Wayne congregation celebrated Mr. Nielander's Distinguished Hoosier recognition after church services on March 26 with a reception featuring a cake decorated as the Indiana state flag.

*David Cobb*

## 8th Annual Colorado Front Range Pizza-Costume Party Held

The 8th annual Colorado Front Range Pizza-Costume Party was held at the Barn in Monument, Colorado on Feb. 26, 2011. Easily the funniest costume was that Scott Ashley, managing editor of *The Good News* and a Council of Elders member, who dressed as a hippie.

The fun party, attended by about 55 brethren of all ages from the Colorado Springs, Denver and Loveland congregations, featured games such as "Survival Island" where participants had to squeeze themselves onto a shrinking space.

*Robert*

## Lafayette, Indiana, Congregation Holds 10th Annual Variety Show

On the evening of Feb. 13, the Lafayette, Indiana congregation held its 10th Annual Variety Show. Elder Michael Grovak presided over the evening's entertainment as the Master of Ceremonies. The acts were truly diverse—ranging from



Jamie and Winston Snyder at the conclusion of the variety show Jeopardy game

folk songs to fractured-fairytale skits to recitations—and boasted performers of all ages. Highlights of the evening included a UCG-Lafayette Jeopardy game and the debuts of several younger performers. During intermission, the congregation surprised Victor and Beverly Kubik with a cake to celebrate their 29th wedding anniversary and Mr. Kubik's safe return from Africa.

*Michael Snyder*





All the teens at the 2011 Families for God Weekend in Minneapolis gather for a photo

## Minneapolis Area Hosts Families for God Weekend

What a wonderful weekend as over 280 brethren gathered in a suburb of Minneapolis, Minnesota, for the annual Families for God weekend. The Marriott Hotel was the spot chosen and served our needs well. The weekend began with a family Bible study on what love means and how to show godly love conducted by Gary Antion, visiting from the home office.

Sabbath services were full to overflowing as additional chairs had to be added to accommodate some late-arriving brethren. Music was featured in the first section of the service. The orchestra accompanied the hymns along with the piano and made for an inspiring song service. The sermon was titled, "What Does God Think of Fun," with inspiring slides of God's creation and several illustrations of the fun side of God and Jesus Christ. We were all encouraged to have good, clean fun and make memories to last a lifetime.

Seminars were delivered by Galen Morrison, Steve Myers, Brian Shaw and Herb Teitgen to add more spiritual meat to the Sabbath. A dinner followed for the parents and younger children while the teens enjoyed their own dinner and a beautifully decorated ballroom for dancing. A "fun" show displayed the many talents of the brethren who attended for the enjoyment of the families who were not involved with the teen dance. David and Stephanie Morker did much of the organizing with help from many brethren to give all who attended an enjoyable weekend.

Sunday had some additional activities as well to complete the jam-packed Families of God weekend. We can hardly wait for next year!

From our perspective, we thoroughly enjoyed being with the families from the Midwest and were impressed with the enthusiasm of so many young people and their families.

Thanks to the Minneapolis ministry and brethren for a wonderful weekend; it was an honor to be there.

Gary Antion

## Name That Hymn and Scripture Challenge in Massachusetts

After the April potluck in Worcester, Massachusetts, the excitement began. Various piano players accompanied by a violinist teased the audience by playing short parts of hymns. Some were easy to recognize while others were quite challenging. Small prizes added to the fun. After the musical portion of the evening, everyone was challenged to identify certain scriptures. Both young and old(er) enjoyed the evening of delicious food, mental exercises and special fellowship.

Gary and Margie Jacques

## Small Congregation Completes All Songs in Hymnal

The Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, congregation of UCGIA would like to share a milestone they reached on Jan. 8, 2011.

Members made a start and tried first one new song, then another, and another. Because it is such a small group, singers could not be shy and rely on others who were more experienced to carry the tune. What was lacked in sweet harmony was more than compensated for by the determination and encouragement of their song-leader, the patient accompaniment of their pianist, and the support of the congregation to step out boldly and participate in the worship service with a new song.

Now the Regina congregation of 15-plus members is happy to report that, after a concerted team effort, they have completed the hymnal and have sung each and every one of the 191 songs! They stepped out of their music comfort zone to do so, and along the way discovered a treasure of beautiful, inspirational mini-sermonettes set to music. They encourage you to make the same discovery!

Joan Hleboff

## Shoes, Shoes, Shoes

For a spring service project, four Wisconsin UCG congregations (Eau Claire, Milwaukee, Oshkosh and Wisconsin Dells) collected 167 pairs of gently worn shoes that were donated to Soles4Souls, an organization that collects and distributes shoes to people living in extreme poverty or those who are recovering from natural disasters. Anyone interested in donating can visit their website at [www.giveshoes.org](http://www.giveshoes.org).

Donna Myers

## Wind River Winter Weekend a Success

The first ever Wind River Winter Weekend was enjoyed by local Dubois and Pavillion, Wyoming, members on Feb. 19-20. Activities included a potluck after services on Sabbath, and games and movies Saturday night. Participants woke to a breakfast feast Sunday morning, before heading to the mountains for a fun afternoon of cross-country skiing. The day ended with tired skiers talking and laughing over bowls of hot chili.

Susan Blumel-Berg



Sarah Jones, first-time skier at the Wind River Winter Weekend in Wyoming

## Worcester Welcomes Mr. and Mrs. Mario Seiglie and Hosts New England Talent Show

On Sabbath, March 5, 2011, the Worcester, Massachusetts, brethren welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Mario Seiglie. After messages from Mr. Seiglie that brought the focus back to two basic truths and four spiritual pillars, all enjoyed fellowship during a potluck. When the Sabbath ended, the annual talent show began. Performers ranged in age from a toddler sitting on dad's knee while he played the piano to performances by seniors.

Participants came from northern New Hampshire to Rhode Island and everywhere in between. Guests and family members participated. There was a warm, loving sense of camaraderie as many stayed late and continued to fellowship. Many agreed it was the best show ever.

Gary and Margie Jacques

## Super Sabbath a Huge Success

Physical and spiritual nourishment was the aim of our first "Super Sabbath" in the Cincinnati East congregation. We began with a Bible Study in the morning with Gary Antion and Matthew Fenchel sharing the continuing study in the book of Acts. This study and the subsequent questions lasted for one and one-half hours. Brethren sat at tables and were able to take notes more easily.

A potluck lunch followed with a variety of dishes that would make a smorgasbord restaurant envious. This gave physical nourishment along with fellowship opportunities.

In the afternoon, we held regular Sabbath services for a full day of complete nourishment. Troy Phelps and Gary Antion were the speakers for the Sabbath service.

The response of the brethren was overwhelmingly positive. Over 100 connections were made throughout the day as the entire day was broadcast. Plans are being made to hold a "Super Sabbath" every 6-8 weeks. We send a huge thank you to all who provided the physical and spiritual food to feed God's Cincinnati Flock.

Gary Antion

## Cincinnati Features ABC-Teen Sabbath

March 26 was a special Sabbath the in Cincinnati East congregations. Current ABC students and some alumni, along with the teens did the serving for services. They learned from and worked with the deacons and deaconesses to fill the various service areas at Sabbath services. Teens and ABC students were greeters, ushers, security, set-up and clean-up, sound technicians and kitchen staff. The deacons, deaconesses and other leaders were on hand to guide them as needed in fulfilling their roles.

Song leaders were Evan Anderson (AM) and Brett Diggins (PM) with Garrett Fenchel providing piano accompaniment for both services. Michael Ball presented outstanding special music titled "See the Lamb" at both services. sermonettes were given by Brett Diggins and Brent Martin, both current ABC students. They brought timely messages. Congregational prayers were given by ABC students

Sermons were delivered by Peter Eddington in the AM and Dennis Luker in the PM, and announcements were given by Gary Antion, which were the only parts of the service done by the elders.

One member comments that he had never been greeted so warmly by so many people. Another mentioned how moving the special music was. Others appreciated the sermonettes and the way the teens and students served.

The ABC students and teens now have a better understanding of what it takes to conduct Sabbath Services and have a greater appreciation for those who serve the Church.

From all the comments received, this was a very successful activity!

Gary Antion



## Cincinnati East Institutes Bi-Weekly Studies

When a survey was given asking about Bible Studies during the week or on the Sabbath, the majority preferred what I refer to as a "Super Sabbath." On the "Super Sabbath" we have both a Bible Study and a Sabbath Service with a pot-luck lunch in between.

Tom Disher, from Media Services' Department, suggested trying the bi-weekly Bible Study as well and cyber-casting it to those who were unable to attend in person. He felt it would be a picker-upper in the midst of the week for the brethren. We launched the first bi-weekly study on February 16. To our pleasant surprise we had almost 50 in attendance and over 140 connections from the cybercasting of it. Gary Antion and Peter Eddington did the initial study and introduced Acts as the book we'll be studying, both in the bi-weekly studies and the Super Sabbath. We endeavor to do about two chapters each study and take questions from the audiences (live and Internet).

We've had such good feedback that we held two more with no fluctuation in live attendance, but great increases in the internet attendance. And from all over the world! We had over 240 responses to the cybercast which represents anywhere from 240-600 listeners. Randy Stiver, Steve Myers and Matt Fenchel also bring their Bible knowledge to the table as they take turns doing the study of Acts. We have two presenters each time.

The hunger for God's Word is wonderful to see. Some even want this study continued through the summer months as well.

If you're interested in tuning in, please visit <http://members.ucg.org> and follow the links for the live online Bible study.

Gary Antion

## Atlanta and Buford, Georgia Congregations Host an Unforgettable 12th Annual Southeast Regional Prom

By all accounts, the 12th Annual Southeast Regional Prom weekend on March 12 in Gainesville, Georgia was a tremendous success! Prior to the prom, 135 people attended church services at the Gainesville Civic Center. In the tradition of Sabbath services prior to the prom, special music was provided by young people during the sermonette portion of the service. Mr. Roy Holladay, the UCG regional pastor for the eastern United States, then delivered a sermon on the importance of developing holy righteous character. Once services ended, teens and their families enjoyed dinner at a nearby restaurant and changed into formal wear for the dance. Once the sun set, the Gainesville Civic Center ballroom was transformed by local

UCG members to a setting befitting the prom's theme.

Just after 8 p.m., the "Once Upon a Springtime Ball" kicked-off for the 67 young people in attendance; this matched the number of young people who attended the prom the year before. Attendees came from Georgia as well as Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio. Teens were treated to a springtime castle-themed venue replete with individual party favors and scores of blue, green, and white balloons. Teens danced for three hours to the latest (well-screened) music played on a custom-designed sound system donated by a local Atlanta-area businessman who specializes in putting on this type of event.

The highlight of the prom involved recognizing the nine graduating Seniors in attendance. The graduating Seniors included: Courtney Bortree from Greensboro, North Carolina; Nicholas Cimino from Tampa, Florida; Sarah Collins from Buford, Georgia; Amy Duncan from Nashville, Tennessee; Ranti Fagbemi from Atlanta, Georgia; Clint Gregory from Nashville, Tennessee; Cheyenne Kellers from Nashville, Tennessee; Joshua Nitzberg from Knoxville, Tennessee; and Jacob Smith from Murfreesboro, Tennessee.



Several teens gather for a photo at the 12th annual Southeast Prom

Around midnight, the evening ended with a collective "thank you" from a large group of teens from the Nashville congregation to the Atlanta and Buford, Georgia members who put on the prom. Several teens and parents commented that this year's SE Regional Prom was one of the best they had ever attended. Furthermore, many teens stated that they looked forward to the next time they would have a chance to see their friends: old and new.

Philip Aust

**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

Grace Montana Jones was born into laughter on July 15, 2010, to her parents David and Joy Jones. Grace weighed 8 pounds and was 19 inches in length. David and Joy are members of the Dubois, Wyoming, congregation of the United Church of God. Grace's older sister, Sarah Evelyn



Grace Montana Jones

Jones (age 5), was ecstatic to welcome a new sister into the family. Since David and Joy grew up in East Texas and were also long time members of the Missoula, Montana, congregation of UCG, Grace has family reaching from Montana to Texas.

Brad and Jenny Huthnance would like to announce the birth of their son Zachary John Huthnance. He was born on March 25, 2010. Zachary now joins his sister, Kaylee, in entertaining their parents on a daily basis. Zachary is a very happy and social baby who continues to bring joy to everyone he meets.



Zachary John Huthnance

### Engagements

Willis Owino Opiyo and Catherine Akinyi Oguda of the Migori, Kenya, congregation were engaged on Dec. 18. The betrothed were each orphaned in childhood and began attending United Church of God services in their youth. After years of disconnect from family, their individual lives will now intertwine into a special family of their own. Their



Willis Opiyo and Cate Oguda

wedding will be held immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles on Oct. 20, 2011, at the Migori Feast site, and it will be the first Church wedding to take place in the United Church of God in East Africa. Willis and Catherine say, "Karibuni Sana," warmly welcoming everyone to join them for their wedding.

### Obituaries

Carl Melvin Hendrickson was born the eldest of three boys on May 27, 1929, in Lewiston, Idaho. He was the son of Fridgoph "Fritz" M. Hendrickson and Martha Jane (Gehrke) Hendrickson.

Carl farmed and ranched out of Anaton, Washington, many years, and it was there he met his bride-to-be, Darlene J. Dodd. Carl and Darlene were married on Friday the 13th of June, 1958, until Carl's death on Nov. 22, 2010.

Carl remembered listening to the Radio Church of God with his parents in the 1940s, and he and Darlene started attending the Worldwide Church of God later in 1958. They were baptized in July of 1959. The nearest church was 3½ hours away, so after driving weekly for 10 years,



Carl Melvin Hendrickson

they moved to Spokane, Washington, in 1969 to be closer to the congregation. Carl was later ordained a deacon. Carl and Darlene started attending the United Church of God in 1995, where he attended until his health declined,



a month before his death.

Carl enjoyed hunting, fishing, farming, gardening, attending church and “get-togethers” with family and friends.

Carl is survived by his wife of 52 years, Darlene; his three children, Karl, Darla, and Salena; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren with two more on the way; and a younger brother. Carl is greatly missed.

James Everett Cloud, 81, of Royalton, Illinois, died Saturday, Jan. 1, 2011. He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Barb; their son, Jeffrey Cloud; two granddaughters, Julie Cloud and Lindsey Cloud; two great-grandchildren, Zachary and Davon Hopkins; and two sisters, Mildred Cleared and Lucille Lee. His parents and two brothers, Charles and William Cloud, preceded him in death.

Jim was a decorated army veteran of the Korean war, a retired construction painter and an avid Chicago Cubs fan.

Jim was a member of the United Church of God congregation in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. He and Barb were baptized March 2, 1975.



James Everett Cloud

He and Barb have held faithfully to their calling. Both as a veteran of the Korean conflict and as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, Jim was no stranger to hardship. He had endured through many over the years. And in spite of increasing health problems the last several years, he faithfully attended services. The very Sabbath he died, he was in the process of getting ready to leave for services.

All who knew and loved Jim greatly miss him, especially Barb and their family. But we know he faithfully finished his course and thus, there is a crown laid up to give him at the resurrection. In anticipation, we go forward to that day.

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

# news

## AT A GLANCE

Continued from page 1

Church go through such turmoil? What is the work and what is God teaching us about ourselves in preparation for His Son's return?

**Solomon's Last Great Feast Message** by Randy Stiver. Gain a fresh perspective and better understanding of the preacher of wisdom in this intriguing overview of Ecclesiastes. Consider the impact that Solomon and Israel had on the world of 1000 B.C. Take away a much greater sense of value for not only for God's ultimate wisdom, but the profound significance of His annual Holy Days.

**Solomon on Sex, Marriage and Marital Conflict Resolution** by Randy Stiver. Savor the poetic beauty and sacred sexual celebration within the divine institution of marriage. This overview of the Song of Solomon presents the power and joy of marriage as it should be, and how to maintain the harmony of the God-given attraction of a husband and wife for each other.

**Tribe Trackers Guide to History and the Future** by Randy Stiver. Discover how much fun history can be! Where did the lost tribes of Israel go after they were taken into captivity? What adventures did they have? How can you track the tribes across the continents and through the centuries to their modern homelands in northwest Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and southern Africa? The Tribe Trackers Guide provides insight into the significant supportive evidence behind the conclusions of our booklet, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.

**The Biblical Principles for Overcoming Addictions in Our Lives** by Dennis Luker. This presentation will explain what an addiction is and how to overcome it. The addiction could be to any substance or harmful behavior which interferes with our spiritual growth. Those attending will also learn how to help someone else struggling with an addiction. God's Word reveals the principles we need to know.

**Overview of the Gospel Writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John**, a six-hour presentation by Frank McCrady. To enhance understanding of the gospels, he will discuss each Gospel Account.

He will address:

- Who were these men?
- Why are they called the "Synoptic Gospels"?
- Why did each writer/apostle write the way he did and cover the material he did?

Next, participants will digest the entire Sermon on the Mount with special focus on the Beatitudes.

We invite you to attend and be invigorated by the Word of God at this year's Cincinnati Continuing Education Seminars.

Gary Antion

## Cincinnati Plans Regional Women's Weekend in 2012

The United Church of God Cincinnati East congregation cordially invites ladies to join them for a women's enrichment weekend on March 16, 17 and 18, 2012. The invitation is open to any lady who would like to attend who can make the trip to Cincinnati. The theme is "Understanding You, Understanding Me, Building Meaningful Relationships." The focus will be on helping us to more fully understand the tremendous variety of personalities and temperaments God has given us. With this understanding, we can develop more meaningful relationships, serve more effectively and build strong bonds with one another in our Church family.

The weekend will be held at a beautiful Embassy Suites Hotel in Blue Ash, Ohio. The registration prices vary according to the number of ladies sharing a room and a payment plan has been established for those who would like to use it.

Information about the weekend is posted at [www.womenofvalor.org](http://www.womenofvalor.org) or you may write to Eileen Sharkey, P.O. Box 503, Lebanon, OH 45036-0503, or by telephone at (513) 932-6117 to receive a registration form with full details.

LeeAnn Luker

## 2011 United Youth Camps Approaching

Take a look at the 2011 camp schedule for planning purposes if you intend to attend camp (or know somebody who does).

- Camp Cotubic, Ohio: June 19-26
- Hye Sierra, California: July 3-10
- Camp Woodmen, Alabama: July 3-10
- Northwest Camp, Oregon: July 24-31
- Camp Pinecrest, Missouri: July 31-August 7
- Winter Camp: Late December

Mitchell Moss

## Southern California Congregations Plan 2011 O.C. Bash

The OC Bash is a young adult/teen weekend that was created in order to bring God's young people together to grow spiritually in one ideal loca-

tion: Orange County, California. For years there have been young adult/teen weekends all over the country, but for some time this opportunity to grow spiritually was not being provided to those who wanted to unite in Southern California. In July of 2005 the OC Bash was officially launched and has continued to grow exponentially. Over the years there have been attendees from almost every state and some attending from different countries.

If you have a desire to grow closer to the Creator and with your spiritual brothers and sisters, this is the weekend for you. To begin the OC Bash, a meet and greet evening where ice breaker games are played allows all of the attendees to branch out and get to know one another before the other activities. This meet and greet evening will be followed by a Friday free day. There are no "official" activities planned for this day so that visitors that come from afar can explore the region of Southern California. There is so much to do here, so go ahead and journey! If you do choose to stay local during this free day, many opt to head down to the local beach to surf, swim, tan and/or get to know others of like mind until the Friday evening beach bonfire.

The Friday evening beach bonfire will provide you with a one-of-a-kind opportunity to watch the sunset on the beach as God's holy Sabbath day is introduced. This same evening, many will gather around our beach bonfire pit to fellowship, bible study and/or sing worship songs to God. After a good night of rest, a brunch and Bible study will be given by a few of God's young adults. This unique interactive study will provide you with the opportunity to discuss God's words with young people from all over the world and has proven to be one of the favorite activities of the weekend.

After Sabbath services there will be a pizza dinner provided to you just before the sun goes down. The Sabbath comes to an end late this time of year, so following the pizza dinner, we will be able to open the gym doors at approximately 8:15 p.m. The open gym night is an evening filled with basketball, volleyball, handball and an epic dodge ball game. The dodge ball game is reserved for the last hour, the final activity of the night, and is open to all who would like to participate. Two large teams will go head to head to be crowned the OC Bash dodge ball champions. Board games and other activities will be provided for those who choose not to play sports during this evening's activities.

Sunday morning we will head down to Doheny State Beach for the annual Doheny beach party. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be provided for lunch as you enjoy another one of Southern California's most beautiful beaches. Many will take this last opportunity





A few attendants of the 2008 O.C. Bash pose for a group photo

on the beach to play beach volleyball, surf, or lounge on the beach before they head home. The Doheny beach party will be followed by a farewell dance later in the evening. This farewell dance gives you the opportunity to spend one last evening enjoying the company of your spiritual family until next year's OC Bash.

We know that this OC Bash will be the most epic of all, as it gets better and better every year. This is the case because we have been blessed enough to have a group of people who are yearning to spend time with others of like mind; iron sharpening iron. When this happens, God truly blesses this kind of activity, which has been evident in the past. We are looking forward to reuniting with those who have attended in the past, and also getting to know new brothers and sisters in the faith. See you there!

*Aaron Weis*

## 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 educational institution and one of the educational programs that United Church of God offers and supports. It is a vibrant nine-month course that takes you on a journey through the Bible with an emphasis on developing godly character. If you have ever wanted to know what it is like to have an educational system that is conducive to your belief system, then ABC is for you!

This experience will be one of the most exhilarating that you will

encounter in this life.

Please join the Class of 2012 for your journey through the Word of God and enhance your spiritual life through greater understanding of how to live God's way of life.

To apply, please go to <http://abc.ucg.org> and download an application. We look forward to hearing from you!

*Gary Antion*

## ABC Deadline For 2011-12 Applications Is July 23

ABC means a special opportunity to grow in biblical understanding and to develop godly character. At ABC, we are still accepting applications for 2011-12. The deadline for applications is July 23.

If you need an application, you may write for yours at: PO Box 54992; Cincinnati, Ohio, 45254-0992. Or simply go to <http://abc.ucg.org> and download an application. You may e-mail us at: [gary\\_antion@ucg.org](mailto:gary_antion@ucg.org). Or if you prefer, please call Gary Antion, the Director of Admissions, about any ABC-related information. Please hurry because there are just two months before the deadline for 2011-12. We look forward to hearing from you concerning your desire to attend this dynamic program of biblical studies.

*Gary Antion*

## Feast Registration and Key Dates To Remember

May 7, 14 and 28 – Days to turn in the Festival registration form by

head-of-household members in the U.S., Canada and Caribbean.

May 28 – Announcement at services for notification of U.S. and Canadian Feast transfer requests approval.

May 31 – Early housing reservations begin for those who qualify.

June 5 - Housing reservations begin for U.S. and Canadian members at 10:00 a.m. in time zone of the Feast site you will attend.

For Festival sites outside of the U.S. and Canada, transfer approval notification will come directly from that site's coordinator.

*Charles Melear*

## Days of Unleavened Bread Holy Day Attendance and Offerings Reported

The totals for the attendance and offerings for the 2011 Days of Unleavened Bread season have been tabulated and reported by the business office. Those figures are as follows:

### First Day of Unleavened Bread

Attendance:	8,225
Offering:	\$544,408.14 *

(\* Once all offerings are processed, which were individually mailed to the home office by those who did not attend a service, the actual amount should reach approximately \$560,000.)

### Last Day of Unleavened Bread

Attendance:	7,553
Offering:	\$547,662.84 **

(\*\* Once all offerings are processed, which were individually mailed to the home office by those who did not attend a service, the actual amount should reach approximately \$565,000.)

*Gerald Seelig*

## Little Rock, AR, and Memphis, TN To Celebrate 50th Anniversaries

The Little Rock, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee, congregations will be celebrating their 50th anniversaries together on July 9, 2011. The celebration will be held in Little Rock, Arkansas.

A special Sabbath service will be held with a meal and a slide show of pictures and memories. The following day, July 10, we will have a picnic to finish the celebration.

If you would like to join us and be a part of this special event or to find out more information please contact Fred Nance by e-mail at [fred\\_nance@ucg.org](mailto:fred_nance@ucg.org).

Also those who wish to contribute pictures or share information on the history of the congregation, please e mail them to [lbblankenship@sbc-global.net](mailto:lbblankenship@sbc-global.net) or mail them to Lonnie Blankenship, 339 Randall Dr., Jacksonville, AR 72076. Please be sure to list which congregation the pictures correspond to and a short description of the photos.

*Fred Nance*

## ABC 2011 Charity Auction Raises \$5,600

The 2011 Charity Auction, put together by the ABC class of 2011, was a tremendous success. With acts ranging from a *Veggie Tales* skit to spot-on ABC instructor impersonations, the entire audience was roaring with laughter.

In between the various skits and songs, Mr. Brent Martin auctioned off baked goods that were made by some of the ABC students and volunteers from the local congregation.

The ABC class began collecting donations in January, receiving many gift cards, certificates, services and items from local businesses and Church members. Students took lunch breaks to drive to local stores as well as free morning module times to canvass the local areas. A Days of Unleavened Bread fundraiser was held to augment the funds for the charity auction and final donation amount. Over 35 baked goods were provided for the live auction, which brought in \$2,880 on the night of the auction. The silent auction portion yielded \$1,404. With monetary donations that night and from the Days of Unleavened Bread fundraiser, this year's activities raised just shy of \$5,600.

All of the money and proceeds donated that night went to the Zimbabwe Education Fund for children.

The 2011 ABC Charity Auction was an enjoyable, fulfilling experience for all who attended. The ABC class of 2011 would like to thank everyone who participated and donated to this event, making it huge success!

*Sabrina Clore and Amber Duran*



ABC 2011 student Brent Martin auctions off baked goods at the 2011 Charity Auction





# What's New In MEDIA?

## ■ UCG Web Presence Expands

On May 2, Internet manager Aaron Booth reported the following exciting stats for UCG Web activity:

- 34,797** total Facebook fans.
- 11,494** total Twitter followers.
- 614** videos posted on YouTube.
- 1,638,200** video views on YouTube.
- 195** Bible FAQs posted.
- 939,038** Bible FAQs views.
- 379** e-mail campaigns (This Is the Way, UCG Weekly Update, GN Newsletter, WNP E-news) sent.
- 552,171** clicks to our websites generated by e-mail campaigns.
- 66,129** booklet downloads from Apple's iBookstore.

## ■ Airing Schedule

- May 8-14** "How Big Is Your God?" with presenter Darris McNeely.
- May 15-21** "The Coming King of the South" with presenter Darris McNeely.
- May 22-28** "Why Do Governments Fail?" with presenter Gary Petty.
- May 29-June 4** "Who is the Antichrist?" with presenter Steve Myers.

## ■ Writers: Send Us Your Bios!

Media and Communications Services has launched the new UCG.org site. On the new site we will feature a bio page for each writer who has had an article printed in any of United's publications (excluding announcements or "Local

Church Updates").

Here's what we need from all writers:

- 1. A short bio** (two to three paragraphs, written in third person).
- 2. How you want your name displayed** (e.g., Tom versus Thomas).
- 3. A high-quality photo** that shows your face clearly. Please do not send a group shot. Photos must be sent in JPEG format.
- 4. (Optional) your e-mail address.** This will allow our system to automatically contact you when someone comments on your article.

Send your information to bios@ucg.org. Thank you for helping make the new website a success!

## ■ The Telegraph quotes Darris McNeely

After the news of the death of Osama Bin Laden broke, *The Telegraph* reported live on its website as news reports from other sources came in. Among the news sources quoted was a *Good News Web* commentary by Darris McNeely, who posted that same day. In his piece, he noted that the date Bin Laden's death was announced was the same date that Hitler's death was announced in Berlin 66 years earlier.

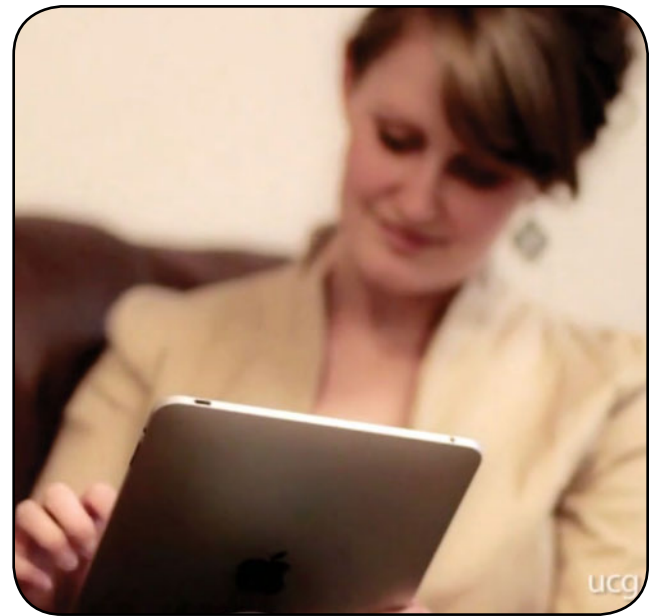
## Featured Link

### ■ New Website Promo Video

<http://tinyurl.com/newsitevideo>

Watch the video for our new website,

featuring Media Communications and Services team members Aaron Booth, Tom Disher, and Peter Eddington and shot and edited by Jamie Schreiber. You can learn more about the new UCG.org website and the underlying philosophy that went into its creation.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 20-22, 2011:** "Building Bridges" Spokane Women's Retreat.
- May 15-16:** General Conference of Elders annual meeting, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- May 22:** ABC Graduation
- June 6-10:** ABC Continuing Education Seminar, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- June 12:** Pentecost.
- June 19-26:** Camp Cotubic, Ohio
- July 3-10:** Camp Hye Sierra, California
- July 3-10:** Camp Woodmen, Alabama
- July 9:** Little Rock, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee, 50th anniversary.
- July 24-31:** Northwest Camp, Oregon
- July 31-August 7:** Camp Pincrest, Missouri

# UNITED NEWS



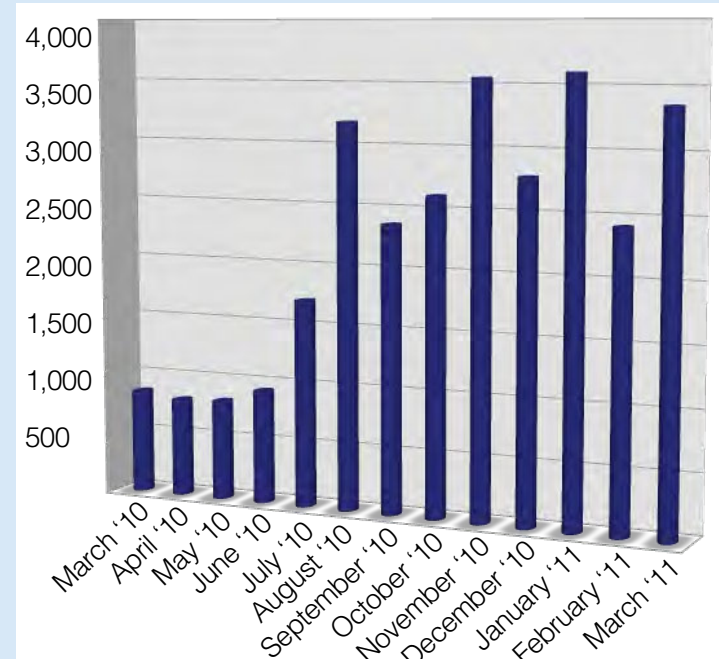
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## UNITED STATISTICS

### Beyond Today Monthly Responses

March 2010-March 2011



## Attention Graduating Seniors and Parents

### Send Us Your Bios!

**Congratulations!** We would like to feature the 2010 high school graduates in the July *United News*. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions and send a photograph by **June 10, 2011**.

1. Graduate's Name
2. Parents' Names
3. Congregation and Pastor's Name
4. High School Accomplishments
5. Church Activities/Hobbies/Interests (tell a little bit about yourself)
6. Plans After Graduation
7. Additional Comments (favorite quote, favorite scripture, motto, advice, etc. Please identify which it is, so we don't think your advice is your motto, etc.)

Also include your phone number or e-mail address to use to confirm spellings, etc. (They will not be printed.) Please send with a recent photo (conforming with biblical standards of dress and hair length) of the graduate by **June 10**.

By e-mail to: Mitch\_Moss@ucg.org.

By mail to: *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027.

We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length; 250-word maximum length. Thanks!