



## news AT A GLANCE

### Two Amendments Passed by GCE

The General Conference of Elders passed two amendments to the By-laws of the United Church of God. The two amendments are:

**Amendment to Bylaws 8.4.3**—this allows the Council to operate when there are no candidates in line to fill the vacancy or vacancies (so long as there is a quorum of 8 Council members for a meeting), and also gives the Council the authority to appoint someone to a vacancy until it can be filled by an election. This amendment passed with 203 yes votes, 28 no votes.

**Amendment to Bylaws 9.1 and 9.2**—no member of the management team (all officers and operation managers) may serve concurrently on the Council. This amendment passed with 201 yes votes, 29 no votes.

Gerald Seelig

### General Conference Chooses New Council of Elders Members

The General Conference of Elders balloted and chose new members to serve on the Council of Elders. There were already two vacant seats on the Council, one of which (the international seat) is terminating this year. The General Conference elected Gary Antion to fill the other vacant seat, which will terminate in June 2013. Along with the vacant international seat, the seats on the Council held by Aaron Dean, Darris McNeely and Robin Webber were up for election. The General Conference elected Darris McNeely, Donald Ward and Robin Webber to the three U.S. seats and Bill Bradford (from Australia) to the international seat, all four of which terminate in June 2014.

Additionally, the General Conference approved two amendments to

See "News at a Glance," page 13

# Serve as Christ Serves



**Nigerian Elder Oludare Akinbo** updates the General Conference of Elders on Sunday, May 15, on the state of his country as part of the combined international reports

■ That was the theme of the 2011 General Conference of Elders, which re-energized the ministry in its mission to serve God and serve others.

by Mitchell Moss

Mario Seiglie gave the keynote address of the annual meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, which was attended by over 300 elders. At the meeting, church business was balloted on by the elders, educational seminars were conducted, reports were given on the state of the church internationally and a question and answer session with the Council of Elders was held. For a general overview of each day of the GCE, visit <http://realtimeunited.wordpress.com/category/general-conference-of-elders>.

Mr. Seiglie reminded those gathered that their service as elders and min-

isters is not ultimately to men, but to God and Jesus Christ. The disciples of Jesus had many arguments about who would be greatest in the Kingdom to come, but Christ corrected them, setting the example of what true Christian leadership looks like—service to God and service to men.

As Mr. Seiglie explained, Jesus gave eight different titles to those in the Church, all of which have origins in servitude:

1. *doulos*, the lowliest in a household, who would wash the feet of guests,

2. *diakonos*, one who waits tables, and the origin of our word "deacon,"

3. *huperetes*, which literally means "under-rower," referring to one who works in the galley of a ship, and which is the Greek word translated as "minister;" one who brings people out of darkness,

4. *poimen*, one who is a shepherd,

5. *episkopos*, literally, "overseer;" one who takes care of the sheep,

6. *presbuteros*, meaning an older man; one who has spiritual maturity and insight,

7. *euaggelistes*, one who brings good news to others and the Greek word from which we receive the English, "evangelist,"

8. *apostolos*, one sent by authority. It is Jesus Christ's authority on which the gospel is sent, not that of the apostles.

Mr. Seiglie finished his keynote by encouraging all the elders to follow the example of service set by Jesus, who continues to serve us to this day, by serving Him and others in the spiritual body of Christ of which the United Church of God is a part. **UN**



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#### BY THE NUMBERS

# 241

Elders who participated in the General Conference of Elders



# God Protects and Leads Transformation of International Work

■ Africa was one focus in the 2010-2011 international reports given at the GCE.

by Howard Davis and Melvin Rhodes

Africa was a particular focus in the 2010-2011 annual international reports at the General Conference of Elders. At Sunday morning's meetings, Chairman Melvin Rhodes led the presentation with amazing stories of God's interventions to preserve the integrity of the United Church of God throughout the world. It was a summary of events across the world where individuals, coming from continents away, helped one another as God enacted providential breakthroughs and heroism through patient faith and divine insight. Members put the clarity of Scripture first to protect themselves and entire church congregations. In the midst of it all, God also solved long term issues and created new opportunities for United's churches and evangelism

efforts throughout this important region of the world.

The context of these positive developments was five months of unrelenting crisis as Satan attacked all United congregations with strife and division, leaving no corner of the globe untouched. "In January and February we were faced with losing many countries where we had members," said Mr. Rhodes.

Most people don't understand the size and complexity of Africa. It is an immense area from east to west, as well as from north to south. Cultural diversity is the greatest of any continent on the planet. The distance from the west coast African city of Dakar, Senegal, on the Atlantic Ocean to Mombasa, Kenya, on Africa's east coast is greater than Dakar to Washington D.C., across the Atlantic. The area of the United States can fit three times in Africa with room to spare. See "The True Size of Africa."

Mr. Rhodes described the situation throughout Africa where he, along with Ministerial and Member Services Manager Victor Kubik, led the efforts to preserve God's

churches in Africa. Mr. Rhodes' pastoral background serving congregations for many years in Ghana and Rhodesia, now called Zimbabwe, was useful to the United Church of God throughout the crisis.

The southern African countries of Zambia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Malawi experienced major disruptions of the church when all six ministers left, though in some areas, most members did not. Mr. Rhodes said that for months, brethren "had been cut off from information from the Home Office." Lack of Internet/e-mail for many in these international areas and direct misinformation by certain men were causing confusion and uncertainty in the congregations. Predatory activities of former ministers in the midst of the confusion meant, in the words of Mr. Rhodes, "The sooner we could get to them the better. There were problems everywhere."

With a zeal for the membership like the apostle Paul, it was

See "International," page 5

# Good Works Raising Money to Buy Bus for Zambian Brethren

We are happy to see God working in the lives of those called and chosen in various parts of the world. Some are in developing countries, and some are in the poorest of lands. Zambia, according to a United Nations study, is the fourth poorest country in the world.

I have travelled to Zambia many times, most recently in April of this year and earlier in January. I have met with our brethren in the Mufulira church and was privileged to be with them on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, where I was also able to baptize two women. The Mufulira church has 35-40 people overseen by Derrick Pringle.

They have a problem, though. Nobody has reliable transportation to services. That is not uncommon in some of our poorer areas, but here, the method of transport is very marginal and even unsafe.

On a recent trip there, as the Pringles, my wife and I were driving to services, we would pick up various brethren on the road and they would climb into the back of the Pringle's SUV. They would all be crammed into the back of the vehicle. Most of the rest of the brethren would have to find their own transportation to services. It's amazing to services they all appear ani-

mated and happy.

Good Works would like to initiate a bus project for Mufulira. We would like to purchase a used Toyota Rosa bus that seats 28 people. This would solve our transport problem and provide dignified transportation for the brethren of the Mufulira church. The Pringles, who own other vehicles in their business of installing security fences, would be able to provide the maintenance for the bus. We would also like to display an advertisement for *The Good News* magazine along with the URL on the side of the bus. As Derrick Pringle and I talked about it, we were very excited and enthusiastic about this project.

The bus would also be used for other Zambia Church events such as the Youth Corps, Youth Camps and the Feast of Tabernacles.

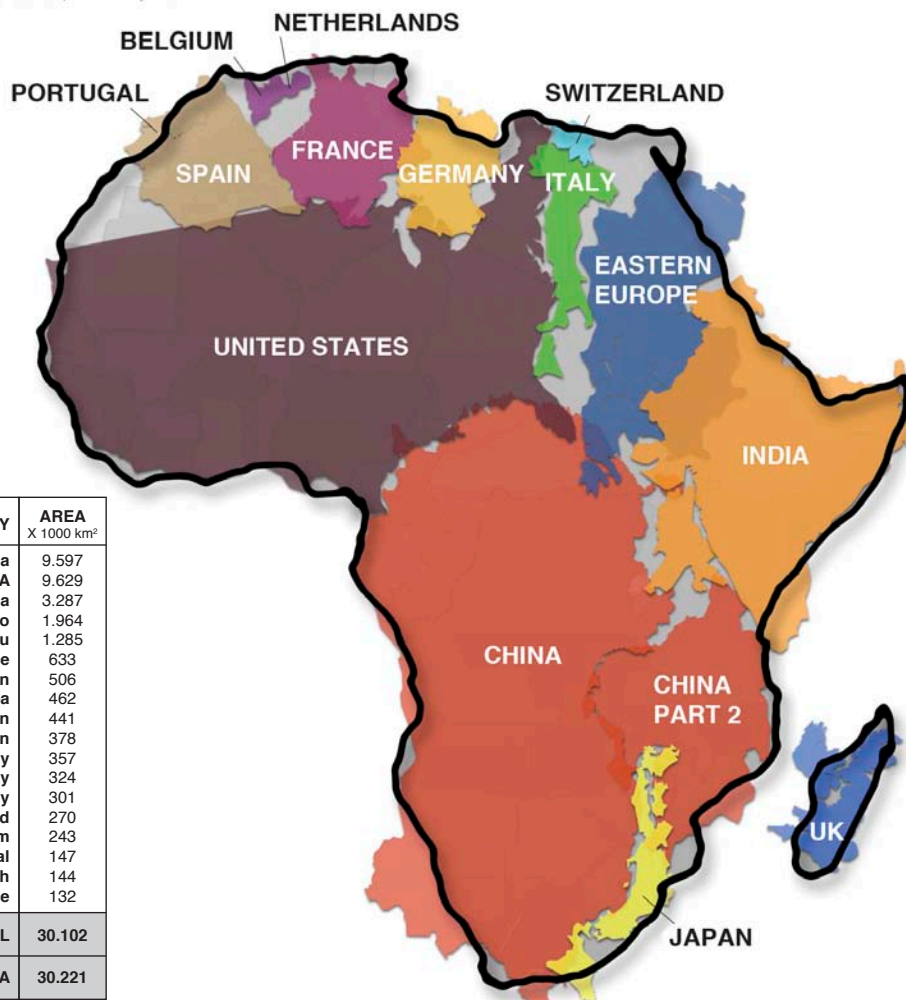
Can you help? The bus will cost \$24,000 and provide a much-needed service for our Zambian brethren. Send your tax-exempt donations to United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027. On the memo line of your check, write "UCG Zambia." If you have any questions, contact me at victor\_kubik@ucg.org.

We really appreciate your support for this project!

Victor Kubik

## The True Size of Africa

Graphic layout for visualization only by Kai Krause



COUNTRY	AREA X 1000 km <sup>2</sup>
China	9.597
USA	9.629
India	3.287
Mexico	1.964
Peru	1.285
France	633
Spain	506
Papua New Guinea	462
Sweden	441
Japan	378
Germany	357
Norway	324
Italy	301
New Zealand	270
United Kingdom	243
Nepal	147
Bangladesh	144
Greece	132
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30.102</b>
<b>AFRICA</b>	<b>30.221</b>



The current arrangement in Mufulira, Zambia, for taking Church members to weekly Sabbath services

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# Profile: R.C. Pritchett

Jesus says in the book of Matthew, “He who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13). Today we see many examples of those whose faith and dedication to God’s Way has sustained them over the decades. R.C. Pritchett is one of these—a living example of a Christian committed to enduring to the end.

Born in 1926, R.C. grew up one of twelve children in the middle of the Great Depression, raised by a widowed mom. After joining the Navy in 1945, he served in World War II and the Korean War. “I earned eight medals, one I was proud of, the good conduct medal,” he said. He received a medical discharge in 1953.

During his time in the Navy, he met, through correspondence, Ernestine Biser, whom he married in 1951. They had three children together and a long, happy marriage until his wife died in 1981.

He was never a regular churchgoer growing up. “As a child, I did not have to go

to church and didn’t want to go.” But, “By 1955, I wanted to go to church,” he said. He began visiting various Christian denominations. He finally settled on a Baptist church in Pleasant Grove, Alabama, and was baptized.

But in 1960 his brother made him angry by challenging him to listen to the *World Tomorrow* radio program. “I began that night at 7 p.m. listening,” he said. When he heard about the Sabbath booklet, he requested it and studied it day and night for a month. After more studying and listening, he was baptized into God’s Church in April of 1961. He has served as a deacon in the Church since 1973 and is happy to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his baptism into the same Church he attends to this day.

At age 85, he is still very active. R.C. plays tennis up to twice per week and maintains an active social life that keeps him in contact with many others. This active lifestyle is what he credits for his longevity. **UN**



R.C. Pritchett

## FORWARD! It’s Not All About You



**PETER EDDINGTON**  
 Media and Communications Services

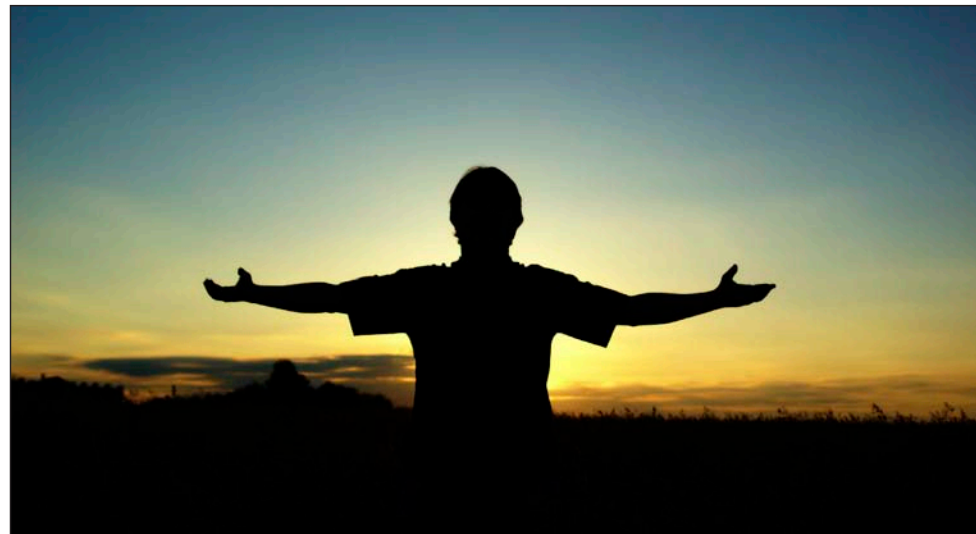
You’ve heard this phrase before, haven’t you? “It’s not all about you!” We usually hear it when we’ve become selfish or have stopped thinking about the needs of other people around us. It often takes a good friend or our spouse to utter those words to us!

Well, there is actually a lot of wisdom in those five words. And when it comes to spiritual matters, it’s never all about you. It’s never all about me. As sons and daughters in God’s family, it’s all about God, not us.

**Until You Know...**

We have to constantly remember that but for the grace of God we are nothing. The skills, talents and abilities we have are to be used to glorify God, not ourselves. Over the millennia, there have been numerous stories recorded of men and women who took too much upon themselves—leaving God out of the picture.

You will remember the famous story of Nebuchadnezzar, who was reduced to the life of an animal after uttering these infamous words: “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30 emphasis added throughout). After pronouncing these



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words Nebuchadnezzar was told by God: “Your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field...until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses” (verse 32).

**Don’t Get the “Big Head”**

It’s not just kings who can get “the big head.” We too must always be watchful that we don’t take the glory for ourselves. The glory must go to God. This is true on an individual level, as well as for the whole body of God’s Church. The successes we may have in preaching the gospel of God’s Kingdom are to accomplish His will and are for His glory. It is not of ourselves.

The apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian brethren about this very thing: “But ‘he

who glories, let him glory in the LORD.’ For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends” (2 Corinthians 10:17-18). We must be very careful to give the honor and glory to God in all we do, not for our own benefit.

Acts chapter 12 recounts the untimely death of Herod Agrippa after he agrees with the gathered crowd that he is “of a god, not of a man!” (Acts 12:22). Immediately “an angel of the LORD struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died” (Acts 12:23).

Let us be reminded to always give the honor and glory to God—who sustains our life—that our very existence (let alone our accomplishments), are to be used for His honor and glory. After all, it’s not all about you and me. **UN**

# Victor Kubik Presents Four Guiding Principles of Biblical Eldership to GCE

by Scott Moss

In a dramatic and heartfelt Monday morning presentation to the 200 elders present (or connected via the Internet) at the General Conference of Elders on May 16, director of Ministerial and Member Services Victor Kubik covered four guiding principles of authentic biblical eldership.

Audio of the 45-minute plenary session, along with the other presentations given at the conference, will be available on the ministerial website.

The four principles related to effective shepherding of God's flock are to feed, lead, meet the needs and protect.

**1. Feed**—In John 21, Jesus Christ made a direct requirement of the apostle Peter, and by extension all elders, saying three times, “Feed My sheep.” This includes providing spiritual help, sound Biblical instruction and a mature perspective on eternal truths. The one attribute unique to elders, when comparing the qualifications of elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus, is the ability to teach. “There will come a time when your teaching will be tested, as the inevitable fires sweep through the church,” said Mr. Kubik. “Are you

building with wood, hay and stubble, or with gold, silver and precious stones?”

**2. Lead**—As shepherds of the flock, elders should emulate the characteristics of biblical figures such as King David, who was known among other things as the human shepherd of Israel. David led Israel skillfully, with organization, management and character. As a shepherd after God's own heart, David brought God's people Israel to a position of national strength and preeminence. So too should the eldership lead their congregations decently and in order to reflect strength and stability.

**3. Meet the needs**—On a daily basis, elders have a biblical mandate (Acts 20:35 among others) to comfort the grieving, settle the double-minded and strengthen the weak. Whether serving as a paid career pastoral minister or a non-salaried elder, the shepherds of God's Church all have an around-the-clock calling, and the brethren are counting on practical help in many ways as they make their way toward the Kingdom of God.

**4. Protect**—Again the example is of David, who took his life in his



Ministerial and Members Services director Victor Kubik addresses the GCE in a Monday morning plenary session on the topic of Biblical eldership

hands to rescue the sheep from the paw of the bear and the paw of the lion in 1 Samuel 17:34. Christ Himself warned of false prophets to be strongly resisted (Matthew 7:15), and one of the major duties of an elder is to rescue the sheep from predators, to stand in the gap and to go after the lost sheep (Luke 15:4). Hirelings will abandon the sheep when the going gets tough (John 10:12), but as Paul admonished the elders of Ephe-

sus in Acts 20:29, a true shepherd will do fearless and unrelenting battle with the savage wolves whenever they attack. This is a matter of critical importance in true Biblical eldership.

In the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Kubik charged all elders to make full proof of their ministry with vigilance, with love and with dedication to the chief Shepherd and to the flock of God. **UN**

## The Jordan Volunteers: An Awe Inspiring, Life Changing Experience

by Stella Helterbrand

The Jordan project has been an awe inspiring, life changing experience for me. As I write this article, I have two months left in Amman, and it's time to start reflecting on the previous eight months. During my time here, I have had ups and downs, highs and lows, wins and losses. Through it all, I have

necessary for me to work were provided. I've learned to be flexible and patient; especially when dealing with those I work with and am around on a regular basis. Being able to remain patient and flexible has helped me to have a better understanding of others, enjoy Jordan to the fullest and build character.

### Understand, Appreciate, Respect

Living in Jordan is completely different than living in America, and being able to understand, appreciate and respect the culture provides a better picture of the people and their country. Little things one would never think of being an issue can create quite a bit of conversation around the water cooler. For example, let's say you're a single American female, you're friends with a single Jordanian male, and he offers to drive you home, to the store or dinner. In the States, you wouldn't think anything of this: just two friends hanging out. In Jordan, however, a number of consequences may follow—you may be thought of as dating, you may become a “prize” to him, and his friends may tell him if they see you with someone else. Knowing little things like this and adapting your behavior and thinking will help you understand, appreciate and respect this unique culture.

### Keep My Light Shining Bright

There are daily challenges in life no matter where you are, and it is essential to keep your light shining bright. Being



Youth Corps Jordan volunteer Stella Helterbrand with the volleyball team she coached at the Amman Baccaalaureate School

able to take daily situations, big or small, and pull a positive lesson out of them has helped me in trying to keep my light shining bright. I've learned there are little things I do that say so much about how I am feeling. Knowing this, putting more thought into my actions and listening to others has helped in keeping my light shining bright. Having been put in some amazing, interesting and trying situations, I've had to remember not to let the light go out. Also, while serving others and trying to make a difference for those individuals, I am working on

personal growth.

There are way more than three lessons I've learned serving in this amazing country, but these are the three that have helped me the most. One never knows where life's road will lead or what tomorrow will bring, but building character today will help for tomorrow. Living life with flexibility and patience; understanding, appreciating and respecting where you are and keeping your light shining bright will help you set your mind on the most important relationship of all. **UN**

### ONLINE

[www.ujcordan10.blogspot.com](http://www.ujcordan10.blogspot.com)

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

learned that the best way to deal with things is to focus on the positive and pull lessons from the negative. Having a positive outlook on living life in a different culture has helped me to fully appreciate and enjoy this wonderfully unique opportunity to serve in the Middle East.

### Patience and Flexibility

In a culture where things are taken one day or one step at a time, this is a valuable lesson. There are many examples of this I can share, but here's just one: Upon arrival at the school, the office I was in did not have any office equipment or adequate furniture. Thankfully, over the course of a few days all the items

imperative that UCG ministers get to these congregations, "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith," but also reminding them "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Act 14:22).

## Francophone Africa

The French speaking countries in Africa were an acute concern because of the language barrier. "We have very few French speakers among the eldership," said Mr. Rhodes, "and there were even fewer men who could go because of full-time jobs." It was particularly difficult to resolve the problems for brethren in the small French-speaking Atlantic coast West African nations of Benin, Togo and Cameroon, each with their own distinctive cultures and native languages.

Mr. Rhodes does not speak French, so on March 13, he took a French speaking-volunteer, Jack Scruggs, as translator for a whirlwind seven-day trip to help the brethren in

hotel, along with the elder from the Lagos, Nigeria, congregation, Oludare Akinbo.

Wednesday, Mr. Rhodes met with the entire Cotonou church for three hours in the evening. He gave a Bible study, translated by Mr. Scruggs into French, on preparing for Passover. Included in the sermon was a segment on examining yourself in the light of Galatians 5, the fruit of the spirit. He spent some time elaborating on the first fruit of the spirit, which is (agape) love. After the study, there was a Q & A, during which members asked, "Where is this love?" They said, "We've never felt it."

The brethren asked candid questions and received equally candid answers regarding the difficulties in church leadership. Mr. Rhodes was very forthcoming that the members were not the cause of the crisis but the

nou brethren had a minister who can speak a language they understand and who will be able to frequently visit the congregation.

It was as if long-lost family members had found one another. After very affectionate well-wishing and farewells, the brethren left confirmed in their decision to remain strong in God's work in the United Church of God.

very sharp but appropriate in light of the crisis. Mr. Rhodes was asked about the former minister's claims that United's leadership was going to abolish the Sabbath, Holy Days and also many other accusations.

Mr. Rhodes explained that these fabrications were without any basis in fact. He attributed the lies to Satan, the author of cha-

*One church member had been very confused over the recent difficulties in the church, but after the visit said he and all the brethren were thrilled—it was like being newly baptized.*

Mr. Akinbo returned to Lagos, Nigeria.

Very early Thursday morning, Jack Scruggs went to the Benin national police headquarters and the Foreign Ministry to ask for an extension on the 48-hour transit visa. He was told that if they were still in the country after the deadline, they had to report to the Department of Immigration. Mr. Scruggs interpreted this in English to mean, "Get out of Dodge."

So they did. A member who owns and runs a car transport service volunteered to drive the delegation 85 miles to Lome, the capital of Togo, which he said would take 90 minutes. It turned out to be a faith-building, six-hour marathon of bad roads, no air conditioning in 100 degree heat, thousands of pot holes, typical African border crossing bureaucracy and a car breakdown. To top it off, there was not one bathroom facility during the entire trip! The trip ended in hitch hiking, with a stranger driving them safely to the final destination—an outdoor café outside the Lome airport.

At the Café, they met for two hours with two leaders from Ghana (Messrs. Henry Aikins and Frank Arthur) and the Togo elder Mr. Kossi Fiaboe who acts as Chief of the Bureau of Telecommunications for the Lome International Airport. The Ghanaians left after their discussion, and Mr. Fiaboe led Mr. Rhodes and the others to a meeting with 25 members representing the Togo brethren in Lome. As in Cotonou, Mr. Scruggs translated the two-hour meeting in the same format of sermon and Q&A. The questioning was

os who is attempting to destroy God's work.

Like the brethren in Cotonou, Lome brethren expressed deeply-felt appreciation for the attitude of service brought by the Council representatives. They said they would confer and give United their decision. Mr. Rhodes was invited to speak on the Sabbath if he had to remain in Lome.

The original plan was to return to Benin and fly back to Douala, Cameroon, for the Sabbath service. But the Benin authorities had made it clear that they could not return to Benin. This meant that they were effectively stranded in Togo. Mr. Rhodes had the option of moving farther west into Ghana, where he has a multiple reentry visa, but Mr. Scruggs could not do that. Rather than separate, Mr. Rhodes decided to remain with Mr. Scruggs until they could get a direct flight out of Togo. They were able to book a flight for a Saturday-night return to Paris, where they could link up with their original flight schedule. Meanwhile, they had the opportunity to attend Sabbath services in Lome, which turned out to be quite providential.

This time Mr. Rhodes spoke on Christ-like service, asking members if they had the heart of a servant. On a continent where a high percentage of people have domestic servants (who are often treated badly) and where abuse of authority is commonplace, the sermon was well-received. Halfway through translating, Mr. Scruggs was tired and asked if anybody else could translate. The elder's son had attended school in Ghana and knew English. He stepped forward. At one point,



**Melvin Rhodes and Jack Scruggs** with Cotonou, Benin, member Michel Ogoudele

French West Africa. Mr. Scruggs is a retired 68-year-old church member from Portland, Oregon, who learned French at the Sorbonne University in Paris. Mr. Scruggs served in foreign intelligence for the U.S. government in Paris, French-speaking Vietnam, Morocco, Senegal and other places throughout the world. Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Scruggs had not met previously.

## Official Opposition

After an overnight stay in Douala, Cameroon, where they were met by the local deacon, Moise Mabout, the three men flew to Cotonou, the capital of Benin, a country the size of Tennessee. They had to wait all day for their Air Chad flight, which was six hours late.

Mr. Rhodes told the GCE that the authorities "were not very nice, didn't seem to want us in the country, threatened to deport us and put us on the next plane out. I noticed that [the next plane out] was to Libya! Things were not looking very good!" The deacon, Mr. Ganagla, in the Cotonou, Benin, church, talked with customs officials at the airport. Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Scruggs were able to get in with a "transit" visa. They learned this meant that they had only 48 hours before they had to be out of the country.

The delegation then had dinner at the

unfortunate victims of a struggle by former U.S. ministers over the control of power in the church. In an interview later, Jack Scruggs explained that the Cotonou brethren and leadership "noted the contrast between Mr. Rhodes' message of the UCG ministry of service and their previous minister's desire to lead." They were not "impressed with the perceived arrogance" of that minister when he had very recently visited Cotonou, urging them to split away from United to follow him in creating a different church. The brethren had said that they had only had one ministerial visit every two years. Melvin Rhodes assured the brethren of the commitment of the home office leadership to ensure a minister visit them on a much more regular basis to serve them.

After those comments, little did Mr. Rhodes know that things would work out that very day to make that commitment a reality. Oludare Akinbo, Nigeria's UCG pastor, who had come for discussion with Mr. Rhodes, stayed for this Cotonou Bible study. He does not speak French, like the Cotonou brethren do, and had never met them, despite living only 60 miles away in nearby Lagos, Nigeria. But during the meeting, he learned that he and the brethren speak the same native African dialect, Yoruba! Just like that, the Coto-



**Melvin Rhodes playing with baby Amos** of the Cotonou, Benin, congregation before asking God's blessing on the little boy

See "International," page 11

## Against the Odds

As a high school math instructor, one of the topics that I cover in some of my classes is probability, or setting the odds. Probability can be defined as the numerical likelihood that a given event will actually occur. It seems inevitable that a true Christian is going to frequently face battles throughout their lifetime where the odds are against them.

Part of it is due to the fact that true Christians are overwhelmingly outnumbered in the world—in the neighborhood of 50,000 to one. We face a multitude of situations in which the worldly, mathematical odds are definitely against us. This can be very discouraging. So discouraging that we can be tempted to try to improve the odds by compromising our beliefs, lowering our standards and rationalizing to make ourselves an exception to God's laws. In times like these and so many others, when the human odds are truly against us, we need to keep a Godly perspective in mind.

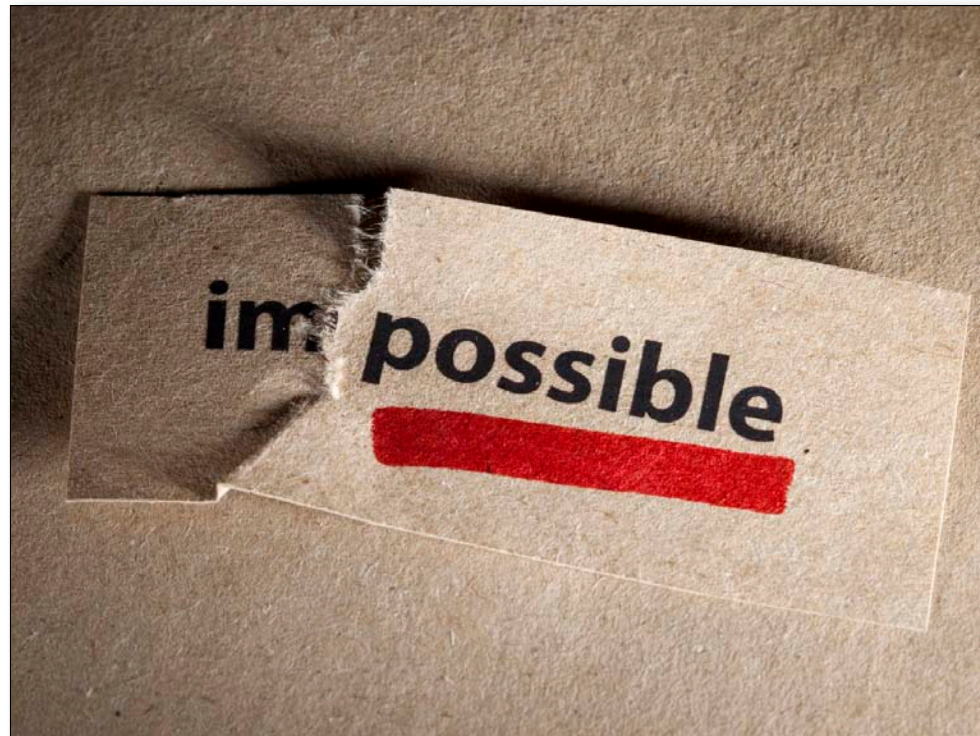
1. Don't ever be intimidated by the odds!

Be strong, of good courage and don't be afraid to battle hard just because the odds are against you. The odds only *predict* the outcome. They don't *determine* the outcome. Even in worldly circumstances, we find examples of heroic battles against overwhelming odds. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, "Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your

might," in spite of what the odds might say, because later in verse 11, we read, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong...nor favor to men of skill."

2. Having God on your side is better than having the odds on your side. Historically, we can be greatly encouraged by just a few of the many biblical examples where God intervened when His people faced long odds. For example, what were the odds that Gideon and a small band of 300 men would be able to rout multiple thousands of Midianites? Or what were the odds that Hezekiah and his people would be able to withstand the massive Assyrian army that was poised to attack Jerusalem? Who can forget the story of Elisha and his servant when they were surrounded by the Syrian army? Elisha told his servant, "Do not fear, for those who *are* with us *are* more than those who *are* with them" (2 Kings 6:16). Don't look to the physical odds, look to the spiritual odds. In all of these situations, the odds of these events happening in the way that they did without God's intervention would be unbelievably astronomical!

3. Obey God, even if you have to accept the outcome predicted by the odds. In Daniel chapter 2, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego knew that the odds of surviving the fiery furnace were severely set against them. But they didn't break God's commandments, even though it could have meant losing their lives! As they stated in Daniel 3:17-18, they knew that the God that they served was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace, but even if He chose not to deliver them (and they therefore had to accept the outcome predicted by the odds), they were still resolved not to worship the gold image



or serve other gods.

4. When the odds are against us, we have the opportunity to demonstrate faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). One of the ways that Christians today are tested is in matters that have to do with jobs, wages and finances. Peter wrote that the genuineness of our faith is more precious than gold (1 Peter 1:6). God desires to give us every good and every perfect gift, especially when we are working hard to multiply the talents that he has given us and follow his commands.

In our society today, the numbers are against us and a true Christian will face difficult odds and predicaments. But that's not a reason to be discouraged or intimidated. The key is to courageously

and faithfully stay committed to God no matter what the odds! Jesus tells us that, "with God, all things are possible." So if God is for us, who cares about the odds against us? **UN**

Linda Hansen  
Salem, Oregon, 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).

# Feast Goers Welcome in Sri Lanka & India!

If you have not yet finalized your Feast plans, your brothers and sisters in India and Sri Lanka are eagerly waiting to welcome international family members to join them in celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles!

The recent changes in the church did not afford advanced planning of the Festival, but recently the Feast sites for both countries were finalized!

## Sri Lanka

Approximately 20-25 Sri Lankan brethren will be meeting together at the Mermaid Club and Hotel Kalutara near Beruwala, Sri Lanka. The hotel is located amid a vast garden of coconut palms on the golden sands of Mahawaskaduwa, a cozy fishing village. The cost of the hotel is approximately US\$105 for a double occupancy room, which includes three buffet meals a day. Single and triple occupancy rates are available. Services will be English with the warmest of fellowship before and after services.

A visit to this tropical island—where food is delicious, sight seeing phenomenal and the brethren are gracious, friendly and enthusiastically desirous to see the coming of God's Kingdom—will be a Feast you'll not soon forget!

## India

Approximately 25-30 Indian brethren will be meeting at the beautiful Jaypee Palace Hotel and Convention Center in Agra, India, for the Feast this year. The hotel is an award winning five-star hotel in Agra, which blends the subtle Mughal architectural brilliance of India with modern amenities. Room rates are approximately US\$160 per night, double occupancy, which includes three buffet meals per day. This will be the first Feast that many of the Indian brethren have ever kept together, and they are excited to share this Feast with brothers and sisters from around the world! Services will be primarily in English with translation into the Hindi language for some of the local brethren.

A visit to India will be a life-changing experience. As a developing nation it is a land of many contrasts. Agra is the home of the world famous Taj Mahal—one of the seven wonders of the world. A trip to India will leave you with an earnest desire to see God's Kingdom come for the many poor and impoverished people you will see. But it will also be a spiritually uplifting experience to meet your brothers

and sisters who seek to learn more about the plan of God and with all their hearts want to share this glorious truth and gospel of the Kingdom of God with their fellow countrymen.

If you are interested in celebrating the Feast with your Sri Lankan or Indian brothers and sisters please call David Schreiber at (507) 377-8151 or e-mail him at David\_Schreiber@ucg.org for more information or to make hotel reservations in Sri Lanka or India.

If you want to travel internationally and you earnestly seek to serve your brothers and sisters in Christ in any of the international sites around the world, please refer to the 2011 Festi-



val Planning Brochure for more information. You can make a difference by sharing your time, talent and love with brothers and sisters in international areas. And of course we seek and appreciate your earnest prayers for God's blessing on all the Feasts around the world where He has chosen to place His name. **UN**

# Amazing Sri Lanka and Incredible India

■ My wife and I recently spent two amazing weeks visiting the churches and brethren in Sri Lanka and India (April 15 to May 1). Our journey followed the path made previously by fellow elder in Christ Ken Murray from Australia.

by David Schreiber

When Mr. Murray and I heard the brethren were temporarily without a pastor, we volunteered to visit and encourage God's people there. What we experienced was much more than us encouraging them, but we ourselves were deeply moved, inspired and humbled by the many brethren we traveled to see.

## ONLINE

<http://tinyurl.com/ucg-india>

**SEE: Many of the sights and people the Schreibers saw while in India.**

## Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, we visited over 25 brethren. Many have been part of the Body of Christ for less than 10 years. They were feeling alone, and their once-peaceful and loving group was unsettled and beginning to divide. They asked many questions, but their main concern was that the doctrines of God not be watered down, particularly the Sabbath. Living in a country of Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic traditions, they have sacrificed much to obey the one true God and keep His Sabbaths Holy.

## India

In India, we saw the same unrest among the brethren, but also a strong belief that the church should not be

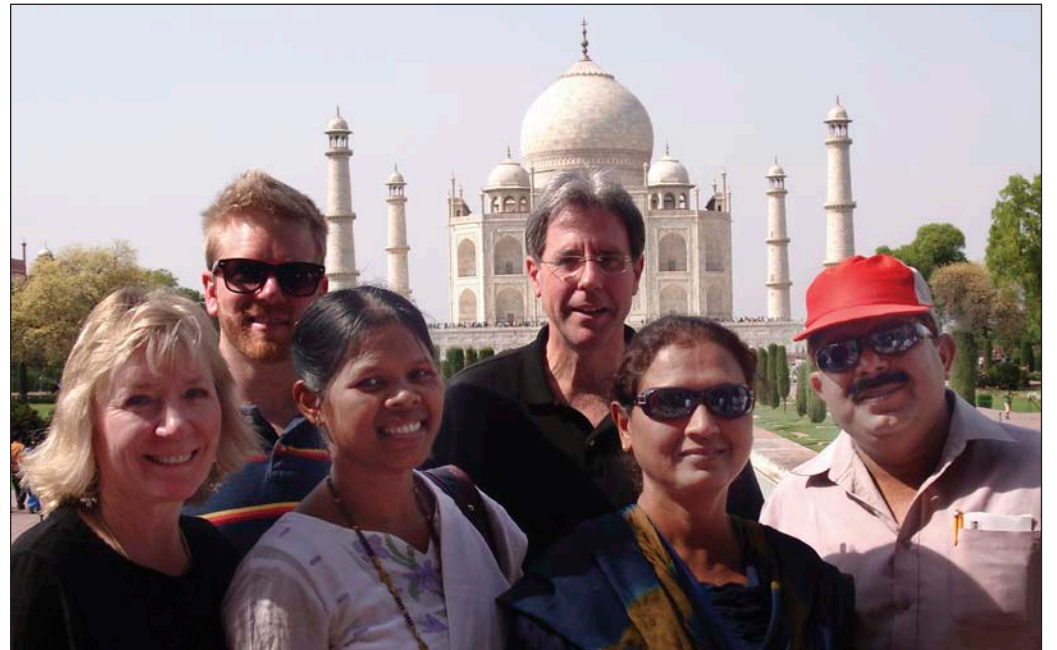
divided. They did not want to leave the church and follow a man. Some feared that, after losing their long time friend and pastor, no one would come to visit them. One man's wife said with faith, "God will send someone to us, I will not follow a man."

We visited many brethren in Sri Lanka and India in their homes. Some have modest and humble dwellings and lack many of the "necessities" that church members in other countries take for granted. Though having little, they are rich beyond measure. Their desire to learn more about God's way of life is heart-warming. In order for some of our members in Sri Lanka and India to attend church, some take up to three crowded and non-air conditioned buses one after another. Some Sabbaths they hope to have enough bus or taxi fare money. This is common to these zealous brethren, and we were inspired by their faithfulness.

India is a large and poor nation. In the 70s and 80s, there were many large churches among God's people, but now the brethren are scattered and only a few meet together each Sabbath. In Agra we spent the Last Day of Unleavened Bread with 24 lovely brethren. After services we stayed to answer their questions and later visited many in their homes. Our travels then took us to visit other faithful brethren living in the cities of Hyderabad and Bangalore.

## G.P. Samuel

We heard of a group of about 42 Sabbath keepers in Chirala, India. This group invited us to visit them, and when we arrived at their church building we were surrounded by men, women and children enthusiastically greeting



From left: Jolinda Schreiber, Jamie Schreiber, Sara Mandora, Dave Schreiber, Shobha Samuel and George Samuel. George and Shobha Samuel hosted the Schreibers in Agra and Sabbath services are held in their home each week.

us. They directed our entire party, consisting of Prakash and Sarah Mandora (our translators), Jamie Schreiber, my wife Jolinda and me to the front row to welcome and present us with fresh flower leis.

Words can not express the experience we had with these people. They observe the Sabbath and some of the Holy Days. They carry the name "Church of God." Their pastor's name is G. P. Samuel. He is 75 years of age. He began Sabbath observance in 1964 and began teaching his family and others what he had learned from the Scriptures. In 1982

the Bible Study Course.

In our discussions with members in Chirala, it is surprising how many common beliefs we share. Besides their understanding of the Sabbath day, they do not observe Easter or Christmas. They understand God's food laws and believe the Kingdom of God is coming to this earth. They have felt alone for many years and wondered if there were other followers of the Scriptures in India.

We visited each member in their homes. Some homes were not much more than a hut, but still they insisted that we come in, sit and have a cup of tea. Some asked questions, some asked for our prayers for a specific problem and some requested anointing. We were overwhelmed by the love and hospitality they showed us. During one of the Bible studies I spoke on the Kingdom of God. As I was reading in Isaiah, one of the young girls sitting next to my wife giggled and said, "Oh I can't wait for the Kingdom to come!"

Please join us in praying for our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka and India. They are a gracious and loving people and would love to receive letters from you and, if possible, to have you join them at the Feast of Tabernacles. There will be a Feast site this year held in Sri Lanka at the Hotel Mermaid, Beruwada. In India the Feast will

be held at the Jaypee Hotel in Agra. Your brothers and sisters in India and Sri Lanka would love to spend God's Feast with you this year! For more information about the Feast or sending letters to the brethren in India and Sri Lanka, please contact Dave Schreiber by phone at (507) 377-8151 or by e-mail at [David\\_Schreiber@ucg.org](mailto:David_Schreiber@ucg.org). **UN**



Prakash and Sara Mandora, two Church members from Agra, who traveled with the Schreibers, translating for them



Dave Schreiber meets with G.P. Samuel, the leader of a group of individuals who keep the Sabbath and are learning more about God's way

the congregation built a building for services and Bible studies. He's had much zeal to search out the truth from the Bible. He had read material from many churches and found their teachings were in conflict with the Bible. I'm unsure when he began reading United Church of God literature, but he's read many of our booklets and completed



## From Disciple Simon to Apostle Peter—an Amazing Transformation

■ When Peter received the Holy Spirit, he was obviously converted. But reading the first 15 chapters of Acts and Peter's two epistles reveals a remarkably different man. If Peter could change that much, then we, too, can experience significant growth.

by Don Hooser

Most of us find Peter to be likable and lovable from the moment we are first introduced to him. He definitely had his natural strengths. He was outgoing, gregarious, transparent and enthusiastic. Most important of all, he loved Christ.

Because of being impulsive and strong-willed, his faults were also quite obvious. That's what enables us to see such a contrast after he was converted. Because of that contrast, Peter's example and writings are a great inspiration.

### Unstable, Impulsive and Insecure Simon

Simon was anything but a rock. He wasn't dependable the way a Christian leader needs to be. Without God's Spirit, he often spoke or acted in a way that would be inappropriate for a Christian. His actions belied an underlying insecurity in spite of his outward confidence.

Think of some of his impulsive actions: In Capernaum Peter invited Jesus and the disciples to his house even though his wife's mother was sick in bed (Mark 1:29-30). When Peter saw Jesus walking on water, he said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water" (Matthew 14:28). He impulsively tried to kill

the servant of the high priest (John 18:10). When Christ appeared to Peter and some of the other disciples when they were fishing on the Sea of Tiberius, Peter "put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and *plunged into the sea*" (John 21:7, emphasis added throughout).

All four Gospels tell of Peter's shameful denial of Jesus. The main reason for this emphasis is probably to reassure us that God will forgive even the worst of sins. But it also shows Peter's fear, cowardice and lack of commitment at times. He even "began to curse and swear," perhaps relapsing into habits from his earlier life (Matthew 26:73-74).

Simon Peter was not yet a rock of steadfastness and godly character.

The process of conversion isn't completed at baptism. We see evidence of Peter's further growth long after he received the Holy Spirit. Consider how Peter shrank back from eating with gentiles when men from the Jerusalem

church were present—and this was many years after his conversion (Galatians 2:11-13). However, much to Peter's credit, he evidently took Paul's correction well and repented of that.

With all of Peter's strengths and abilities, it seems a little odd that he would have some underlying insecurity. But character traits are largely formed by experiences in childhood, and who knows what Peter's childhood was like.

### Bold Simon

Peter is known for being bold, spontaneous and impulsive, but without knowing more about his background, it is impossible to know what caused him to be that way.

Peter was outspoken, which can be both good and bad. When Jesus asked His disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter immediately and emphatically stated, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15-16). Jesus was clearly pleased with Peter's understanding and rever-

ence. It could be that Jesus' compliment went to Peter's head, but we cannot know with certainty.

Right after that, Jesus described His upcoming death and the events that would lead up to that. "Then Peter *took* Him aside and began to *rebuke* Him, saying, 'Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!'" (verse 22). Peter apparently took hold of Jesus, nudged Him to one side and began to correct Him sternly! This was audacious, presumptuous and foolish.

Then Jesus "turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men'" (verse 23). Shortly after Jesus had praised Peter He gave him a stern reprimand, calling him "Satan"! That's because Peter began relying on human reasoning and was speaking in opposition to God's divine plan.

In the Garden of Gethsemane before Jesus was arrested, He told His disciples that all of them

## What does Pentecost mean?

Fill in the blanks below.

Use the letters in the boxes to find the answer to the question.

Hint: Read Acts 2 to help you find the answers!

Suddenly a \_\_\_\_\_ as of a rushing \_\_\_\_\_

They saw what seemed to be \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

All of them were \_\_\_\_\_ with the Holy \_\_\_\_\_

They began to speak in other \_\_\_\_\_

This was spoken of \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ Joel

Last issue's puzzle answers:

### Spot the Difference

1. An extra column of smoke.
2. An extra mountain peak.
3. Extra hills in the distance.
4. Two resting camels instead of one.
5. An extra strap on the camel's pack.
6. A different color mouth strap.
7. No shadow of one tent strap and peg.
8. Different color belt.
9. An extra handle on the jar.

Answer: C \_\_\_\_\_



would “stumble” and be “scattered.” “Peter answered and said [bragged] to Him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble’” (Matthew 26:33).

Ah, “let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). Peter was undoubtedly sincere, but any unconverted person is blind to his own weaknesses.

### Presumptuous Simon

The next chapter tells about the transfiguration of Jesus that Peter, James and John were invited to witness. “And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’” (Matthew 17:3-4a).

Peter, the compulsive talker, *interrupted* the discussion between Jesus, Moses and Elijah and “answered”—even though no one had *asked* him anything or *invited* him to speak! First he made a trite comment and then went on to offer his advice!

“While he [Peter] was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’” (verse 5). Perhaps Peter learned to be less quick to assume he understood the spiritual implications of a given circumstance.

### Solid Rocklike Peter

Simon’s unconverted character was arguably less stable than his converted nature. But in spite of Simon’s impulsiveness and inconsistencies, Jesus prophetically named him for what, by God’s grace, he would become. After Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, “when Jesus looked at him, He said, ‘You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas’ (which is translated, A Stone)” (John 1:42). *Cephas* is Aramaic, and *Peter* is Greek.

Peter became a rock-solid pillar in the Church and part of its foundation.

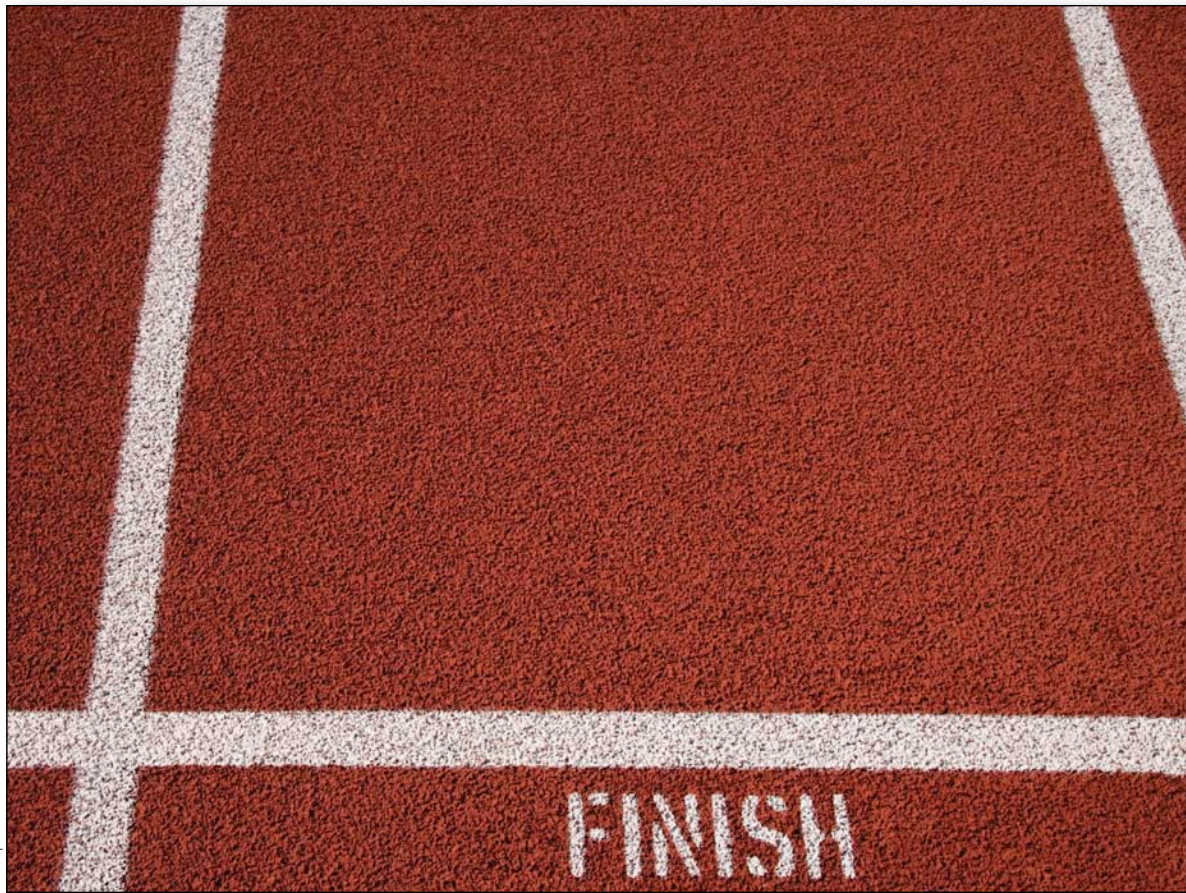
Peter’s first recorded sermon is related in Acts 1:15-22. Already we see an added dimension of sobriety, maturity, wisdom and knowledge of Scripture, clearly inspired by God’s Holy Spirit. With his second sermon in Acts 2, we see a mighty preacher of the gospel giving a focused and powerful masterpiece of a sermon.

Acts 3:1 tells us that “Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer.” That shows a willingness to go where the people were, as Jesus had instructed Peter to do.

When Peter and John were arrested, they were inspired and fearless in their testimony because they were “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). The officers “saw the boldness of Peter and John” and marveled (verse 13).

### Humble Peter

Peter went through the most humbling experience imaginable. He well under-



*When Jesus called him, Peter had many rough edges. But through the miracle of conversion, he finished the race as a pillar of the Church.*

stood the gravity of having forsaken and even denied Jesus Christ. He had “wept bitterly” (Luke 22:62). All of us have let Christ down many times, although in less dramatic ways.

So it was a very emotional time when Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” (John 21:15-17). Each time Peter answered in the affirmative, and Jesus responded with, “Feed My lambs... Tend My sheep... Feed My sheep.” That’s a sobering message Jesus meant for all of us.

After Pentecost, Peter was no longer self-centered and vain. He sought to do all to the glory of God. When Peter healed the lame man at the temple and a crowd gathered in amazement, Peter said to them, “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” (Acts 3:12). He let them know it was by the power and name of Jesus Christ (verses 13-16).

Peter wrote, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be *clothed with humility*, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore *humble yourselves* under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:5-6).

Peter begins his second epistle with “Simon Peter, a *bondservant* and apostle of Jesus Christ” and speaks of Jesus as “*our God and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Peter 1:1).

Peter’s humility and loving-kindness are evident all through his two epistles.

Spiritual humility is indicated by regular reliance on prayer. Acts 3:1; 4:31; 6:4; and 10:9 are examples of Peter’s devotion to prayer.

### Respectful and Submissive Peter

Who would have thought that Simon— independent, self-willed, strong-willed, presumptuous, brash and bragging Simon—would become a role model of a humble servant-leader, having a shepherd’s heart? But all that we read of Peter in the book of Acts shows him to be that humble, dedicated example. His two epistles are filled with beautiful instruction on how to live the Spirit-filled life.

Peter makes it clear that what motivates and empowers us is the “living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). This first epistle has a theme of hope (1:13; 1:21; 3:15).

Peter explains that we should be grateful even for our trials, though “tested by fire,” and that we should “rejoice with joy inexpressible” because of our great *hope* (1 Peter 1:6-11).

After giving us the big picture in chapter 1, chapter 2 begins with: “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:1-2).

Then notice his theme of submission to authority.

“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good” (1 Peter 2:13-14).

“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it

patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God” (1 Peter 2:18-20).

Then Peter reminds us of the example of Jesus Christ who submitted to the authorities and did not retaliate or revile but “committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:21-25).

“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear” (1 Peter 3:1-2).

“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:7). The word “likewise” indicates that Peter considered this a continuation of his theme of submission. A loving, self-sacrificing husband will suppress his natural selfish inclinations and put first the needs and desires of his wife.

The next section begins with “finally,” which indicates this is still part of his theme, plus it amplifies the theme to the larger beautiful picture.

“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not

returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

“For ‘He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil’” (1 Peter 3:8-12).

In chapter 5, Peter reminds elders that they are to be good shepherds to “the flock of God,” as we will give account to “the Chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:1-4).

Then Peter writes, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:5-6).

### Disciple Simon Became the Apostle Peter!

Yes, who would have expected Simon to become a primary example of rock-solid conversion, truly living up to his new name Peter? And who would have expected Simon to become one of the world’s greatest teachers of love, hope, humility and respect for and submission to authority?

Spiritual conversion requires the greatest miracle of all, but God’s Word is reassuring. If people like Peter and Paul could become deeply converted, then we know there is hope for all the rest of us. **UN**

*Don Hooser is an elder serving in the Dallas and Sherman, TX, congregations.*

# What In The World Do I Do Now?

■ You just graduated from college.  
Now what?

by Mitchell Moss

You may be looking around at classmates who have lots going on—they've lined up internships, they're going to job fairs, they've got interviews, they're meeting with recruiters, they're joining the trade magazine mailing lists.

But you've got much less going on than that. You went to one job fair recently. You've flipped through trade magazines once or twice. And that's about it. Your lack of progress, compared with the amazing progress your classmates are making, is starting to fill you with anxiety about the future.

*What on earth do you do next?*

Read on for inspiration. I faced this very conundrum and managed to not become homeless. You can, too!

## You're not alone

First, some encouragement. You're not the first one to graduate and wonder what in the world to do. Many others have found themselves in this situation (including me) and most of them continued living, breathing and having a life worth living. The fact that you haven't got so much going on as your classmates do doesn't mean you're doomed—it just means that you need a kick from behind to get things going.

## What to do

### 1. Do work.

That phrase means exactly what it says. Why do your friends have so much going on? For most of them, it's because they made those things happen. They do work. Sure, some may have a leg up because of who their father is or who their neighbors are, but not for all of them. If you want to have lots going on, you've got to make things happen. Solomon wrote, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10, NIV). That implies that your hands have to find something to do first.

One huge asset in making things happen is your student advisor. They are usually very connected in the community and know lots of avenues for moving for-

ward. Your advisor is usually well-known in the industry you picked as a major. They say that getting a job is all about who you know—and advisors know a lot of people. Use that to your advantage. Ask them what to do, who to talk to, where to interview, how to prepare your resumé, how to interview, etc.

### 2. Pray.

A wise man once said, "Work as if everything depended on you and pray as if everything depended on God." You've absolutely got to make things happen if you want to find out your next step in life. But David wrote, "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1). So which is it—do work, or wait for God to do work? Obviously, it's both.

This is where prayer comes in. Prayer is absolutely critical in walking the right path through life.

But what do you pray about?

Before I answer that, let me say this: If your spiritual life is faltering or simply not all there, this has got to be the first priority. If your problem is in making time to study the Bible or pray (or meditating—don't forget about that!), then the first principle comes back into play—do work. Pick your time every day to study and pray, *then do that every single day*. Nobody else will do it for you or can do it for you.

So, once you're praying and studying everyday, what do you pray about?

Pray to God and ask Him to show you the right path. In other words, His will.

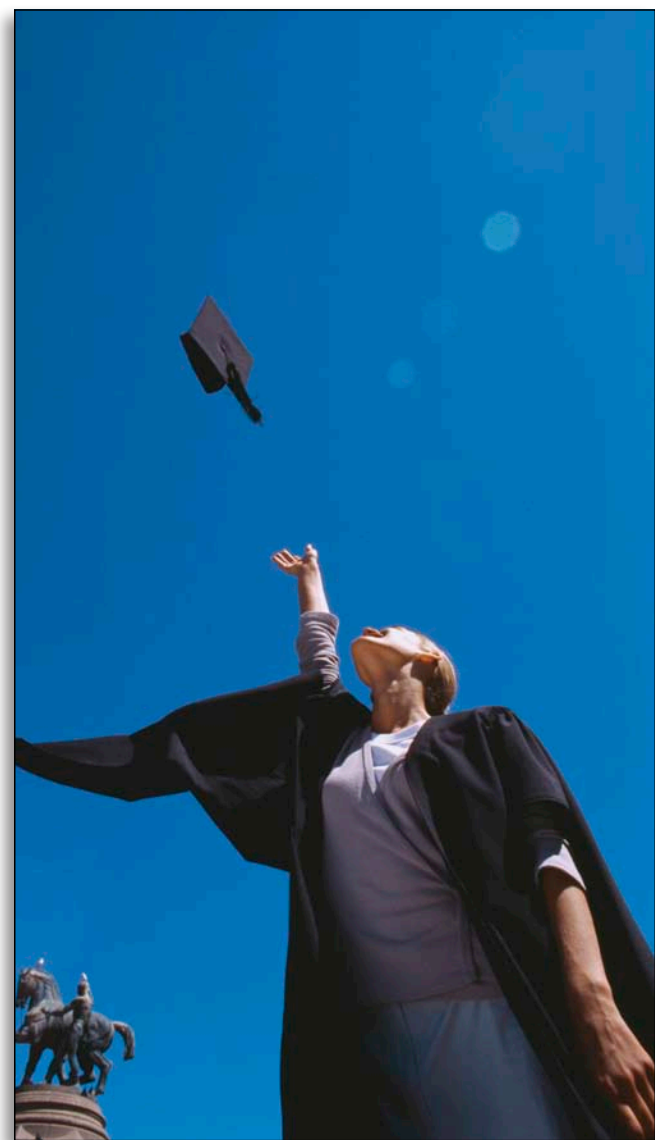
This is such a big deal that Jesus put it right there in the model prayer—"Your will be done" (Matthew 6:10). When Jesus said, "Your will be done," He didn't just mean on some global, macro scale. He also meant for God's will to be done for you, individually, in your everyday life. And He didn't just mean in some nebulous, vague, unspecified way. He meant for you to be a specific part of that will. Jesus said, "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:50).

So what you're asking is for God to show you His will so you can do it—so you can make things happen. Also, you should also remember that it is not wrong to ask God to bless you. The apostle James said, "...yet

you have not because you ask not" (James 4:2). Ask with the faith that your Heavenly Father desires to give you good things.

Now, a disclaimer: God won't always show you exactly what to do. In the Church, we often hear ministers talk about God "opening doors" and "closing doors." Usually they're referring to times when it becomes obvious that God wants something specific to happen or not happen. But a lot of the time, it's not clear that God has a preference either way. That's called free will, and you've already made use of it by choosing to go to college, choosing a major and following through with that major. God wants what's best for you and knows what specific steps you should take on your path of life to make your life the best, but He doesn't always make the steps clear and obvious. Sometimes He just lets you choose what you want.

This may be one of those times, so if it doesn't become painfully obvious what to do even after you've tried to make things happen and prayed to God, just



keep on keeping on. Make more things happen.

## If all else fails, go to ABC

That subhead sounds like a joke, but it's actually serious. Ambassador Bible Center, sponsored by the United Church of God, *an International Association*, is fantastic and I'd be remiss if I didn't mention how awesome it is and how glad I am that I attended it after my college graduation. My spiritual maturity grew leaps and bounds because I attended ABC.

If I may make this advice column personal, let me tell you specifically how things worked out for me. After college, I went to ABC (which I had been planning to do since beginning college). After ABC, I looked for jobs and did exactly what I just told you to do. I eventually got two part-time jobs right after the Feast. I really hoped one of them would make me full-time, and they told me they really were working to make that happen. I found out about the job I'm doing now (editing this newspaper you hold in your hands) and applied, but still felt like the part-time job I was working would be better for me. I prayed that God make it clear which one He wanted me to have if He had a preference. If He didn't have a preference, I asked that my part-time employers hire me full-time.

When they offered me the position at the home office, I asked my other employer if they could offer me anything. They said that there just wasn't enough work yet to make me an offer. The whole time they were telling me this, I was smiling, because God had made it clear. My prayer was answered.

So if you're beginning to feel that anxiety that wells up from the pit of your stomach because you haven't figured out what you'll do next, remember, you're not alone. After you remember that, then start making things happen. But follow through all the while with continuous prayer, leaning on God and Jesus Christ. In short, work as if everything depends on you and pray as if everything depends on God. **UN**

*Sometimes God just lets you choose what you want. This may be one of those times, so if it doesn't become painfully obvious what to do, just keep on keeping on. Make more things happen.*

ward. Your advisor is usually well-known in the industry you picked as a major. They say that getting a job is all about who you know—and advisors know a lot of people. Use that to your advantage. Ask them what to do, who to talk to, where to interview, how to prepare your resumé, how to interview, etc.

Another asset for graduates looking for work is LinkedIn. The sole purpose of LinkedIn is to connect people to each other in the professional world—once again, it's about who you know. Fill out your profile (with a close-up portrait of just your face—photos make a huge difference) and search for the people your advisor has connections with. Try making physical contact with those whom you're interested in interviewing with as you find them on LinkedIn—the more someone sees your face, talks to you or even views your online profile, the more you'll stick out in their mind when they're considering job candidates.

Don't be afraid to ask for interviews, ask for help or ask for guidance from industry professionals. Most of

# Opportunity Knocks

■ When an opportunity comes, seize it immediately. It usually does not come back around again.

by Arthur Suckling

Rahm Emmanuel once said, “You should never let a good crisis go to waste.” Despite the fact that I don’t particularly resonate with the man, there is a nugget of truth contained in that idea. I would say it slightly differently: “You should never let a good opportunity go to waste.”

Something happened just recently in the Loveland, Denver, Colorado Springs, and Frisco, Colorado, congregations. Like many areas, we experienced the departure of the pastor. There was no pastor to take his place, and the seven elders got together to discuss, “What do we do now?”

What was so refreshing was that no one said, “I’m in charge,” or, “This is what we will do.” Rather, there was a calm combined with peace and a desire to simply take care of what needed to be done. We volunteered with the attitude to give way to another if anyone else wanted to do it, or we joined forces

and shared the responsibility. Out of this “crisis” arose some new and open thinking.

I don’t know who suggested it, and it does not matter who did. The ideas grew and burst forth based on their own merit. Someone recommended that we ask the male brethren in the church if they would like to have a speaking seminar. The purpose of this seminar was to prepare them to present sermonettes in the four local churches.

to serve God with their “spiritual gifts” (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11).

A careful reading of both these sections of Scripture clearly identifies the brethren having various kinds of spiritual gifts. These ought to be used properly, cheerfully and for the benefit for all.

Due to a certain approach based in history and tradition, all too often very few opportunities existed for brethren to be able to really explore a potential talent. I

was amazing, with 29 men signing up for the opportunity to explore their talents in a sermonette class. So far, after two meetings and much positive encouragement, we have shared some basic speaking information, invited individuals to e-mail their ideas for development, listened to four presentations, and we see much potential growth on the horizon. This after only two meetings, once each month!

Four elders oversee the program and each takes turns to

begun a discussion group. They decided to read a UCG booklet each month and then discuss it as a group. They also desire to be taught some of the tips for speaking and gaining confidence in a relatively new environment.

An overarching goal belies all of this: We should all be able to answer for the hope that lies within us and be able to confidently explain our beliefs to others. Who knows when an Aquila and Priscilla opportunity (Acts 18:24-28) will come our way? Apollos was a man who was eloquent in the Scriptures. Despite this, there was something about which he was “colorblind.” Two brethren took him aside and “explained to him the way of God more accurately” (verse 26).

Clearly, Aquila and his wife Priscilla knew enough to “educate” Apollos in the first place. Apollos had enough humility to listen and learn. Later he became very helpful to Paul.

You never know when an opportunity will present itself. Don’t think of yourself as a bump on a log. If you have a talent, then get going on developing it. Opportunity knocks, and opportunities can’t be taken over.

God expects us to develop our abilities in whatever areas they may lie. Let’s roll! **UN**

*“Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is; treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be.”*

## Develop Your Gifts

The motivation behind this has been clearly spelled out in scripture all the time. Sometimes, like a person who is colorblind, we simply don’t see what is right in front of our eyes. Let me ask a question: Does God expect us to develop our talents? Does He expect us to develop our gifts? The answer is yes, of course He does! In Paul’s letters to both the Romans and Corinthians he encourages them

am reminded of the German poet Goethe, who wrote, “*Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is; treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be.*”

Resultant from the loss of a pastor, new opportunities opened up for the development of talent in the membership and we began to treat people as we thought they could be. A simple announcement was made at church services. The result

give speaking tips and conduct meetings. All men in attendance evaluate sermonettes, and enthusiasm abounds. As individuals grow, they will be given speaking assignments in one of the three churches (two men have already been offered the opportunity). It has been amazing and encouraging to see the untapped desire burst forth like the buds on a tree in the spring.

At the same time, the ladies have

## Continued from “International,” page 4

he had difficulty translating a passage into French and someone suggested he speak Ewe, the local dialect, which is also spoken in the Volta Region of Ghana. Just like that, English-speaking ministers can serve the Togo brethren with sermons translated into Ewe. Literature will continue to be received in French.

As a result of the trip, the two Togo congregations and the Benin congregation will use their native languages for translation, meaning a much higher level of service from UCG ministry. And there is a member to translate

informed Mr. Rhodes that, after discussion, the Togolese brethren had decided to remain in United. Mr. Rhodes had left behind recordings of four sermons, which the brethren had listened to. They found no hint of a change of doctrine in any of them, which assured them we were not changing doctrine—something they had been told. They also cited the sermon on Christ-like service as a reason for remaining in UCG. They were excited about the new emphasis on serving. The teens in Togo now have the opportunity to attend summer camp in Nigeria and the members in Togo will continue to have their

to the congregations in those countries. If the translation problem can be solved, these two countries can also be served as part of a wider West African region. This will save the church money and enable the United Church of God to serve the people of each country with more frequent ministerial visits.

Nigerian elder Oludare Akinbo also spoke at the GCE and related that, in Nigeria, a West African nation of 150 million people, no members have left the United Church of God. The church has been trying to get Mr. Akinbo into the U.S. to attend a GCE for some years. This was the first time he had been able to get a visa to visit the United States.

## Southern Africa

To complicate the difficulties of the brethren, some areas of Africa experience extreme poverty and have great difficulty meeting for the weekly Sabbath. For example, by the time of the Feast of Tabernacles in 2008, Zimbabwe brethren were confronted with starvation. Conditions are better now for the brethren in Zimbabwe, and by Passover, churches in Southern Africa were stabilizing. After Mr. Rhodes officiated at Passover in Johannesburg this year, he flew immediately to Kadoma, a small town south of Harare, Zimbabwe’s capital, where all the brethren rented a large house for Passover, night to be observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread. It enabled all the brethren from the entire country to be together as never before, greatly strengthening them. It only cost \$1,000 to bring everybody to one loca-

tion and house and feed them there instead of the minister having to travel to all the scattered brethren through the immense geography at much greater expense. Mr. Rhodes made the commitment to do this two or three times a year, greatly inspiring the brethren! The church looks forward to much greater spiritual strength and inspiration as times continue to deteriorate in the world.

Mr. Rhodes remembered that Kadoma (formerly Gatooma) had been the home of the first church member he had baptized over 33 years ago. The man had left the church in 1994 over the heresy of the Trinity, which had crept into the church leadership’s teachings at the time. The following morning, the man came to Mr. Rhodes’ hotel and, after a discussion, expressed an interest in further fellowship with United. He asked to see Mr. Rhodes again on his next visit. Another church member had been very confused over the recent difficulties in the church, but after the visit said he and all the brethren were thrilled—it was like being newly baptized.

In January 2011, United only had an attendance of 18 in Johannesburg, seven in Cape Town, and 18 in Durban, after all the ministers left to form a new church. Three months later in April, the attendance had doubled in both Johannesburg and Durban.

The “International Reports” at the GCE finished with an update on India and Sri Lanka (see pg. 7). Mr. Rhodes then thanked all those in all the international areas for everything they had done to serve brethren through the recent very challenging period experienced by the United Church of God. **UN**

*As a result of the trip, the two Togo congregations and the Benin congregation will use their native languages for translation instead of French, meaning a much higher level of service from UCG ministry.*

from English to French in Cameroon.

Speaking for the congregation, Mr. Fiaboe expressed appreciation for the messages and openness of Mr. Rhodes, saying the congregation would meet together and give a final decision about remaining in United. Mr. Fiaboe invited Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Scruggs to his home and later took them to the airport where they boarded flights to the United States Saturday night.

A few weeks later, Mr. Fiaboe wrote and

own Feast site.

At the GCE, Mr. Rhodes asked Mark Mickelson, pastor of the churches in Nigeria, if he would be willing and able to oversee Ghana, Benin and Togo in addition Nigeria. Oludare Akinbo will visit Benin frequently and help out in the other countries as needed. Former Nigerian pastor Fred Kellers will also help whenever he’s able to travel there.

Mr. Mickelson will be visiting Cameroon and Congo in late June, where he will speak



# Local Church UPDATES

## Orlando congregation welcomes four new members

The Orlando congregation is excited to have four newly-baptized members in the Church family! Roger and Joyce Davis, Rejean Dion and Bessie Harris attend church in Orlando and were all baptized during the month preceding Passover. The congregation is pleased to see this growth and looks forward to more as God calls people into His body.

*Tammy Johnson*



Four new members in the Orlando congregation pose for a group photo

## Ladies' Night Concludes the Bay Area Speaker's Club Year

As the 2010-2011 Bay Area speakers' club year drew to a close, 52 members and guests at the year's final meeting (which was also ladies' night) shared a delicious meal and great fellowship. Ladies' night continues the tradition of the club's members hosting a dinner meeting to thank wives and friends for their support throughout the club year. The April 23 event at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Union City, began as the Sabbath was drawing to a close during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Mark Mirigian, speakers' club president, banged the gavel and called the meeting to



Nemesio Maquilan stands up to participate in the discussion at the final meeting of the year for Bay Area's Speaker's Club

order welcoming the evening's guests. Mr. Mirigian conducted the initial segments of club and then introduced the topics master, Steve Thompson. The topics generated a wide variety of responses from the audience. The second half was coordinated by the toast master, Mark Philip Pebworth, who introduced the speaking portion of the club.

The evening's business, topics and speaking sessions were clear evidence of the growth in the speakers and in the club as a whole. The ladies brought an increased energy to the topics session and the men prepared diligently for special guests. Club director Jim Tuck noted how much growth and improvement had been realized over

the club season of seven sessions. It was also encouraging to see the poise and ability of the younger men in handling their assignments. It shows God is working with all ages to provide capable leaders for the Church in the future. Perhaps more importantly, the evening brought into focus the strengthening bonds of friendship and camaraderie among club members.

Of the evening's five speakers, James Goss was recognized as the most improved speaker and Marc Cebrian as the most effective speaker. Neil Boyington was recognized as the most helpful evaluator. Overall, it was a dynamic evening of enjoyment, encouragement and growth as everyone worked together to bring out each other's best.

*Mark Mirigian*

## Columbus, Ohio, Church Hosts First Annual Midwest Teen Prom

The Columbus, Ohio, congregation of the United Church of God hosted the Midwest Teen Prom on Saturday, April 30, 2011, at the new Embassy Suites (Airport) in Columbus. The weekend began with Sabbath services, which had more than 250 in attendance. There were people from six different states. It was especially exciting to learn that 17 teens traveled from the Wisconsin/Minnesota areas.

In lieu of a sermonette, there was a vocal solo by Emily Timmons of Portsmouth, Ohio; two piano, guitar and vocal selections by Marc Eddington and Garrett Fenchel of Cincinnati, Ohio; and two teen choir selections by the Columbus teen choir



The high school graduates of the year 2011 pose for a photo at the Midwest Teen Prom in Columbus, Ohio

directed by Nancy Earls and accompanied by Dottie Seifert on the piano, Ryan Shallenberger on the guitar and Julie Waterhouse on the cello.

Pastor and *Beyond Today* television presenter Steve Myers gave the sermon. Mr. Myers spoke about "Spiritual Apps"—apps (applications) that will help you have a relationship with God.

After relaxing in the luxurious rooms, the teens had a promenade through the hotel lobby area in their stunning prom attire. The parents and families watched as a special recognition and a slide show was given for the 13 graduating seniors in attendance at this year's prom. The seniors received a nice certificate and a gift.

A lovely, sit-down dinner was followed by the prom itself beginning at sundown. Andrew Shallenberger of Columbus served as the DJ. The 106 teens at the prom seemed to dance all evening. It was rare to see anyone seated at all.

The next morning the prom attendees had a delicious Embassy Suites breakfast followed by a pool party. Saying goodbye was difficult, but many made plans to keep in touch with their old and new friends and to see them at summer camps.

The Columbus church was happy to hear from the Embassy Suites that this was the best-behaved group of teens they had hosted. They did not know what to expect from more than 100 teens. Of course, we knew they would be awesome and shining brightly!

"It's just the best feeling to get to dressed up and be with friends for a night without worries: just good times, good friends, and great dancing!" This is how Emily Gunn of Columbus, Ohio, expressed her feelings about the first annual Midwest Teen Prom. The teens and parents both agreed it was

a big success.

Mark Miller of the Cambridge, Ohio, congregation said, "This was an evening of fun. I especially enjoyed the dance and just being with friends. I can't wait to come back next year."

Amanda Burnhauser, of the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, congregation said, "I thought the prom this year was the best so far. It really was an amazing weekend. The people, the music, the activities and location were all perfect. I really liked how they played more modern music. The Embassy Suites was a really great environment to have a prom. Overall, it was an awesome prom weekend."

*Bev Galli*



The beautiful hall where the Midwest Teen Prom was held

**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

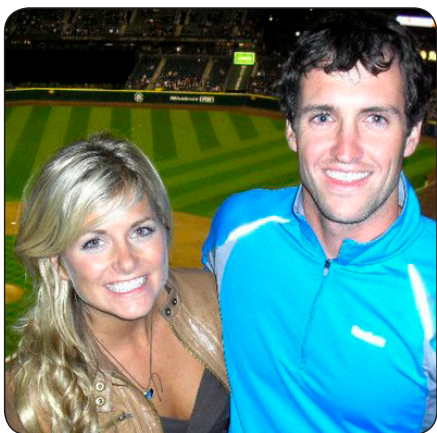
Chris and Elesha Stewart are blessed to announce the birth of their first child, Carson Otto Stewart, born at 12:06 a.m. on March 12, 2011. He weighed 9 lb. 15 oz.



Carson Otto Stewart

## Engagements

Brian and Kristin Krueger of Seattle, Washington, are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Rebekah Krueger of New York City, New York, to Danny Dance of Nashville, Tennessee. Danny is the son of Allen and Pam Dance of Chattanooga, Tennessee. A September wedding in San Diego, California, is being planned.



Danny Dance and Rebekah Krueger

## Obituaries

Leon A. Roeth, 64, of Arcanum, Ohio, died November 16, 2010, at his residence.

He was born December 19, 1945, to Arthur and Winifred Roeth. He married Paula J. Shaffner on August 20, 1965.

Leon was a retired farmer and master carpenter. He enjoyed camping,

helping others and spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren. He always wore a button with a picture of them. He will be remembered by his smile and outgoing love for family and friends.

He was baptized in 1969 and attended the Dayton, Ohio, congregation.

He is survived by his wife, Winifred, his son Larry and daughter-in-law Elizabeth

(Harshbarger) Roeth, his daughter Jeannie and son-in-law Gary Weldon and three grandchildren, John, Autumn and Amber Weldon, all of Tipp City, Ohio.

He was preceded in death by his mother and two brothers, Noel and Timmy.

Mr. Ken DeVilbiss officiated the



Leon Roeth

funeral service held on November 20, 2010.

Shirley Rhoades Salmon, 81, of Higgins Lake, Michigan, died on March 30, 2011, at her home surrounded by family.

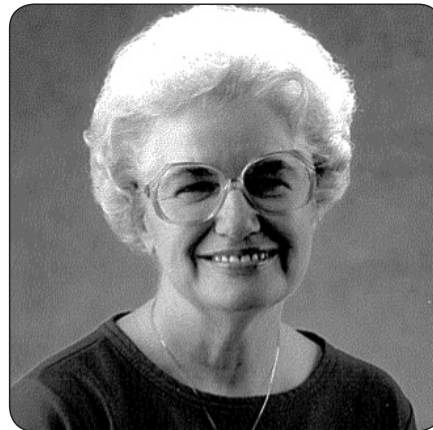
Born December 22, 1929, in Flint, Michigan, she was the daughter of Howard A. and Juanita E. (Tuck) Walker. Higgins Lake had been her childhood summer home, and she was very happy to be back "home." She married Elmer Salmon in 1993 and they bought a motorhome, traveling across the states from Reno, Nevada, visiting family and friends before landing back home at Higgins Lake. She volunteered at Mercy Hospice there and enjoyed reading and playing cards and board games.

She always felt that she had been blessed with two loving marriages. Her first was to Howard B. Rhoades, who preceded her in death in 1987. She was the editorial receptionist at the Worldwide Church of God in Pasadena, California, from 1983 to 1993. Also preceding her in death were her parents; her eldest son, Brooks; a stepbrother, James Walker; two sisters, Kay Donna Robertson and Beth Walker; and her stepfather, Edward Cornell.

Surviving are her husband, Elmer; six children, Norman (Kathy) Rhoades of Cadillac,

Michigan; Laura (Donald) Peabody of Arcadia, California; James

Rhoades of Reno, Nevada; Larry (Mindy) Rhoades of Orlando, Florida; Lisa Matchett of Riverside, California; and Rick (Shelly) Rhoades of Salem, Oregon; 13 grandchildren; seven great grandchildren; sister, Phyllis Walker of Higgins Lake, Michigan; and brother, Malcolm (Diane) Walker of Roseville, California. She was a member of the United Church of God. A celebration of her



Shirley Rhoades Salmon

life was held at Higgins Lake, April 3, with Malcolm Murray officiating.

Peter Boone of Vicksburg, Mississippi, died in his home in April 2010. A memorial service was held in July. He was 54 years old. He honored his parents and obeyed God to the best of his understanding.

Peter was preceded in death by his father, Vinkley Boone; his sister, Mary (Boone) Stephens and his mother, Lucille Boone. He is survived by a sister, Vera Boone of Rhode Island; a brother, Johnny Boone of Maine; a sister-in-law, Vickie Boone; a brother-in-law, Sonny Stephens of Mississippi; a niece, Hannah Stephens of Mississippi and numerous cousins.

He was raised in the Church and was a student at Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Texas, for over three years. He participated in a Bicentennial bicycle ride of mostly Ambassador College students in 1976 and rode his bicycle from one coast of the U.S. to the other. He liked to laugh, loved cars and trucks and could tell you interesting details about unusual makes and models of vehicles. He was there for his parents in their older years to help out, and he cared for his mother at the end when she had cancer. Peter was faithful to the end!

**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

the Bylaws. Any proposed amendment that passes automatically goes into affect the very next day. One of those amendments (that prohibits any officer and operation manager from serving concurrently on the Council) required Aaron Dean and Victor Kubik to relinquish their seats the day after the elections. This left two additional seats vacant. John Elliott was the next in line and immediately took Victor Kubik's place on the Council. That seat will terminate in June 2013. Additionally, Roc Corbett took the seat vacated by Aaron Dean, but Mr. Corbett will only serve until the end of June, at which time Donald Ward will take that seat.

The runner-up for the international seat declined to take the current vacant international seat on the Council. Therefore, per the newly approved amendment, the Council asked Bill Bradford to fill the current vacancy. He will then assume that seat on the Council which terminates in 2014.

Roy Holladay was confirmed (205 yes, 28 no votes) to serve out the rest of the term of the vacated seat he assumed in December 2010. On July 1, the Council of Elders will consist of the following elders: Gary Antion, Scott Ashley, Robert Berendt, Bill Bradford, Sr., William Eddington, John Elliott, Roy Holladay, Darris McNeely, Melvin Rhodes, Mario Seiglie, Don Ward and Robin Webber.

Gerald Seelig

## Elders' Wives Meet at GCE To Encourage One Another

The General Conference of Elders theme, "Serving as Christ Serves," was addressed in a workshop session of elders' wives, focusing on a woman's perspective.

Three speakers representing a diversity of ages and circumstances shared how they are able to use their personal gifts and abilities in their service to God's people.

RaeAnn Dowd was the first speaker. Her husband is Ed Dowd, pastor of the Wichita, Liberal, and Salina, Kansas, congregations of United Church of God. RaeAnn is the mother of three fine boys (ages 10, 8 and 5) as well as the owner of a business, where she serves as an advocate for individuals with disabilities with social services and the courts. With all these demands on her time and her energy, RaeAnn shared lessons she has

learned about balancing priorities and needs as she serves her family, the brethren and her business's clients.

DeLee Hargrove was the next speaker. She is the wife of Vernon Hargrove, pastor of the Columbus and Cambridge, Ohio, congregations. Vernon and DeLee retired in 2009, but were willing to return to full-time pastoring in order to serve the needs of God's people. DeLee shared a few of the many lessons she has learned over the past 49 years of service—especially ways she has supported her husband as he handled the demands of pastoring. Along with these responsibilities, DeLee is the mother of two grown sons and is a grandmother.

The final speaker was Ruth Root, who serves as the office manager of United Church of God, Australia, located in Burleigh Heads, Queensland, just south of Brisbane. With a PowerPoint presentation, Ruth introduced the office staff and shared specific ways God has answered her prayers when needs arose regarding being able to do His work in this area of the world. Ruth also has grown children and a grandchild. She is fully involved in the day-to-day operation of the work of the Church in Australia and is profoundly thankful for that opportunity.

These three presentations were followed by discussion regarding how each elder's wife can uniquely contribute based on her personal circumstances, gifts and abilities. Challenges such as family, health and individual talents were also some of the topics in the discussion period.

The session ended with a resolve to lovingly support and serve one another as we go forward doing the work of God.

*LeeAnn Luker*

## Pastors Training Program Trains Twenty-Four Elders

Twenty-four new pastors came to the home office on May 11 and 12 for an intensive, two-day training to learn the essentials of their new jobs. Two new pastors were from Latin America: Jaime Gallardo from Chile and Israel Robledo from Guatemala. This training session preceded the General Conference of Elders meetings, which started on Friday, May 13.

The new pastors were quite varied in age and experience—those coming out of retirement to assume oversight of three or four churches, new hires from our local elder pool who have been serving in their churches for years and volunteer pastors who are caring for churches while we determine how we can staff them with per-



New pastors Roc Corbett and Clyde Hubbard share lunch together at the two-day pastoral training sessions in Cincinnati, Ohio

manent pastors.

I was so pleased and refreshed with the optimistic and energetic spirit to really care for churches! Most questions had to do with the relevant aspects of how to care for people, which included counseling, sermon subjects and content, conducting various ceremonies, organizing social activities, conflict resolution and much more. In one of our evening question and answer sessions, the one-and-a-half-hour discussion was completely about our outreach and preaching the Gospel.

President Dennis Luker opened the first day by speaking about the high calling of the ministry and the heart of a pastor. Then Roy Holladay gave a presentation about conducting various ceremonies such as weddings, funerals and baptisms.

We then had a longer session about the various administrative responsibilities of the pastor, which included reporting, expenses, handling assistance and other necessary forms. During the lunch hour LeeAnn Luker met separately with the women for a special discussion.

After lunch, Roy Holladay talked about duties and speaking at the Feast of Tabernacles. This year there will definitely be more speaking opportunities for all pastors. Mr. and Mrs. Luker spoke about the pastor's marriage and its challenges.

At the end of the first day's regular sessions, Gary Antion spoke to the group about counseling basics.

The second day began with Mr. Holladay going through the ministerial qualifications and practical principles from Timothy and Titus.

In two sessions for more than three hours Dr. Don Ward, Jerry Aust and Randy Stiver spoke about the principles of preaching. Then Mr. Antion covered some of the most common counseling issues—that of pre-marital and baptism counseling. The day end-

ed with Mr. Holladay and Victor Kubik speaking about maintaining spiritual health and not letting ourselves be overrun by our duties.

All of us agreed that we gained much not only by what was taught, but by the fellowship we had with one another. We look positively to our continuing to work together to serve our brethren.

*Victor Kubik*

## Home Office Welcomes Jacob Trone to the Staff

The home office staff is pleased to welcome Jacob Trone to the team. Mr. Trone has been working with Treasurer Aaron Dean in the Financial Services Department. His job duties include helping Mr. Dean with accounting work and helping Gerald Seelig with accounts payable. This summer he will take over payroll and reimbursement of ministerial expenses.



New UCG employee Jacob Trone

Mr. Trone grew up in Auburn, California, where he lived until moving

to Cincinnati, Ohio. He has two siblings: his brother, Joe, also works in accounting in Sacramento and his sister, Jessica, is a nurse in San Diego. His father, Drew Trone, is a deacon in the Sacramento congregation and his mother, Lydia, is a deaconess there. He has nine other extended family members who attend the Sacramento congregation.

After high school, he went to Sierra College in Rocklin, California, where he received an AA degree in accounting in 2007. He later went on to graduate from California State University Sacramento in May 2010 with a bachelor's degree in accounting with honors.

Mr. Trone will surely use his education and talents in serving the church. "I am most looking forward to getting experience in my major of accounting and in helping the church. It is a great opportunity for me to not only do the type of work that I enjoy doing, but also to be working with people of like mind," he said.

The home office staff and UCG community extends a warm welcome to Jacob Trone!

*Sabrina Clore*

## ABC Class of 2011 Graduates

Sunday, May 22, marked the conclusion of the 12th year of Ambassador Bible Center. Many of the 24 graduates are now on their way home or packing to depart from Cincinnati. And what a year it has been!

The final week was filled with activities. The General Conference of Elders members were in Cincinnati for the Sabbath of May 14. That evening, the entertainment for the elders was put on by the ABC Class of 2011. They performed several of the numbers from the Charity Auction and the chorale completed the evening with two of the songs that they sang in seven different church areas this year. At the conclusion of the evening, Brent Martin, the MC, asked if anyone wished to contribute to the Zimbabwe Education Fund. The fund was supported earlier by the ABC charity auction. To our pleasant surprise, the elders donated over \$780, bringing the total amount for the Charity event to over \$6,000.

Sunday was an opportunity for students to view the General Conference of Elders as they conducted their business and had various reports. On Monday, several of the students spent one final activity day together at King's Island. Tuesday through Thursday were the final days of classes. On Thursday, instructors Stiver, Myers and Antion bid the student a short farewell in messages at student assembly and presented them with



The ABC Class of 2011

commemorative pins, pendants, pictorials and ABC mugs. That evening was the senior dinner-dance at the Italian restaurant Maggiano's. There the students enjoyed family-style meals with one another, all decked out in prom dresses and suits. Several faculty members were able to attend and gifts were presented to the student leaders, chorale members and to the resident faculty members. The evening was a huge success with dancing to music provided by our very own DJs Mike Ball and Zach Hoover.

Friday was set aside for the ABC chorale to record its program for the students to have as a memento. Friday afternoon was rehearsal for graduation. Sabbath was the day for the baccalaureate sermon by Mr. Steve Myers. He was preceded by the Chorale doing its final full performance of the year during sermonette time in Cincinnati East. Mr. Myers followed with his sermon on Salt. He brought out several examples of how salt was used and how we need to have those same characteristics or qualities.

Saturday evening saw a flurry of activities at the home office as Terri Eddington and Lisa Fenchel prepared the decorations for graduation day. Jorge and Kathy de Campos worked tirelessly with the aid of several alumni to prepare and decorate the hall with beautiful floral pieces.

Sunday was graduation day. Around 180 family members, friends, home office staff, instructors, alumni and the Class of 2011 gathered for the 1 p.m. ceremony. Peter Eddington played "Pomp and Circumstance" through the sound system as Eileen Sharkey, the Ambassador Excellence



Happy graduate Lauren Kelly on ABC graduation day with her father, Stuart, and cousin, HannahBeth Cobb

Award Recipient for 2008, led the students in as monitor for the graduation. Gary Antion welcomed the audience as the music died down and reminded all that, "Good young people come from good parents." Randy Stiver delivered the invocation followed by the student address by class president Brett Diggins. The chorale sang their final two numbers, and the students gave a surprise bouquet of flowers to Darlene Shoemaker, wife of chorale director Ken Shoemaker.

President Luker brought the commencement address as he urged the students to remember three important scriptures that will help them through the triumphs and challenges of life: Proverbs 3:5-6; Romans 8:28; and Philippians 4:13. He expounded each and reminded the students to keep the content of those handy as they experience the ups and downs of life.

Four honor awards were given. Amber Duran and Brent Martin received the Ambassador Excellence awards as presented by Mr. Luker. Aaron Dean represented the Council of Elders and gave the Council of Elders Service Award to Sabrina Clore and Michael Roberts for their outstanding service.

The conferring of diplomas was next in the program. Steve Myers,

academic dean, recommended the Class of 2011 for the Biblical Studies Diploma and Mr. Luker conferred it upon them. The students individually received their encased diplomas and walked across the stage as their names were called. After the last student's name was called, the audience gave all the students a huge round of applause.

Frank McCrady, one of the instructors, delivered the benediction and blessing on the refreshments, and then celebrations commenced.

Beautiful and delicious cakes were awaiting us along with punch and the hugs and well-wishes to the class members.

We were very appreciative of all the assistance given by so many to help make this event such a wonderful success for the Class of 2011.

As I write this, I am a bit sad that the students will not be around anymore—having grown to appreciate and love them for nine months. But I have a sense of satisfaction in knowing they will be leaving with a better understanding of the Words of Life from the Holy Bible and the encouragement to continue to build godly character throughout their lives.

Godspeed to the Class of 2011, and may God's blessings follow in your lives.

Gary Antion

## Mountain Region Women's Weekend

The Colorado Front Range churches are hosting a women's weekend beginning Friday evening, July 29, and lasting until mid-afternoon, Sunday, July 31. The location will be in a lodge retreat near beautiful Allenspark, just 15 miles south of Estes Park. The view of Mt. Meeker behind the lodge is spectacular. This location is a little over 60 miles from Denver and takes about an hour and 20 minutes to drive. The airport is slightly farther. The Front Range ladies will do their best to provide transportation from the airport for those needing it.

Ladies will be housed at Highland Retreat in spacious rooms holding four twin beds. Handicapped-friendly facilities are available as well. Meals will be provided in the lodge cafeteria. A private meeting room will be ours throughout the stay.

Cost for lodging, meeting space, two breakfasts, two lunches and two dinners will be \$130 per person. The first dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Friday. A plate can be saved for those who need to arrive later. Registration and payment must be received by June 21. Our contract requires an early rooming list.

The theme for the weekend is "Becoming God's Precious Jewels."

There will be guest speakers from outside the region and several local speakers during the course of the weekend. There will be a bonfire with a generational discussion including ladies from all the past decades on interesting topics. Sabbath services will be held at the lodge.

For more information and to find a registration form, visit [denver.ucg.org](http://denver.ucg.org). You can also call Beth Bradford at (303) 805-0089 or send her an e-mail at [beth.bradford@comcast.net](mailto:beth.bradford@comcast.net). We welcome all ladies who are able to come, and we look forward to having you!

Connie Ashley

## Chattanooga Plans 2011 Ocoee Rafting Trip

The Chattanooga, Tennessee, congregation will be hosting the annual Ocoee white water rafting trip on Sunday, Aug. 7, at 10:00 a.m. As in prior years the church will be utilizing the services of Ocoee Inn Rafting as outfitters for the trip. Participants must be at least 12 years old (Tennessee law) and in good health. Those with bad backs or other similar injuries should not participate due to the strenuous and jarring nature of the activity. Due to the inherent risky activity, all participants must sign a liability waiver. Those under 18 will need a parent or legal guardian's signature before they can participate.

We have reserved a block of rafting spots. In order to guarantee that you have a seat please send a signed liability waiver and a check payable to the United Church of God, Cleveland, for \$28 per person by July 15th to the address below:

Allen Dance  
9201 Cobblestone Hill Drive  
Ooltewah, TN 37363

Please clearly identify each participant, church area and a phone number where you can be contacted. We must have your deposit to reserve you a spot so send it in as soon as possible. This activity takes place regardless of the weather. If you have any questions, please contact Allen Dance by phone at (423) 855-0868 or by e-mail at [alldance@hotmail.com](mailto:alldance@hotmail.com).

Camping and cabin facilities are available in the area. The church does not sponsor a group campsite, but individual families are welcome to take advantage of the opportunities to camp at their own risk if they so desire. The Chilhowee Recreation Area of the Cherokee National Forest is a 20-minute drive from the outfitters. Campsites are on a first come, first served basis and generally fill up on the weekends so early arrival is advised. There will be a camp Bible study on the Sabbath in the Chilhowee Recreation Area as in past years.

Roy Holladay

**Correction:** Last issue we published a lengthy description of the Garden Grove, California congregation's annual weekend, the OC Bash. However, we did not publish any details. The event begins Thursday evening, July 14, with a meet and greet and concludes Sunday, July 17. For more details, visit the OC Bash website at [www.ocbash.com](http://www.ocbash.com).  
Editor



# What's New In MEDIA?

## ■ UCG Web Presence Expands

On May 31, Internet manager Aaron Booth reported the following exciting stats for UCG Web activity:

- 35,717** total Facebook fans.
- 12,640** total Twitter followers.
- 622** videos posted on YouTube.
- 1,676,554** video views on YouTube.
- 197** Bible FAQs posted.
- 35,363** Bible FAQs views (Bible FAQ stats differ greatly from last month because of combining sites and using new analytics to measure traffic).
- 396** e-mail campaigns (This Is the Way, UCG Weekly Update, GN Newsletter, WNP E-news) sent.
- 569,286** clicks to our websites generated by e-mail campaigns.
- 72,459** booklet downloads from Apple's iBookstore.

## ■ Beyond Today Airing Schedule

- June 5-11** "God's Roadmap" with presenter Steve Myers.
- June 12-18** "The Stuff of Dreams" with presenter Gary Petty.
- June 19-25** "The Proof of Prophecy" with presenter Steve Myers.
- June 26-July 2** "The Moment After You Die" with presenter Darris McNeely.

## ■ Writers: Send Us Your Bios!

Media and Communications Services has launched the new UCG.org site. On the new site we 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!

## ■ GCE Report: Internet Team Introduces New Website to Elders

Monday morning, May 16, Aaron Booth and Tom Disher gave a presentation in a plenary session to the General Conference of Elders highlighting the improvements, features and opportunities available with the new website. Afterward, many elders and their wives attended a break-out session, where the duo covered how each and every elder and Church member can leverage social networking sites as well as our own website to preach the gospel.

With regard to social networking, they discussed how sharing links to UCG articles on Twitter and Facebook can increase awareness

of our site and help drive new people there. With regard to the new UCG website, they showed how to create an account, write commentaries and blogs, and interact with non-Church visitors who may have questions on an article or video the church has produced.

## Featured Link

### ■ Incredible India

<http://tinyurl.com/ucg-india>

See the sites and people of India as seen by UCG elder David Schreiber and his wife on their trip to visit Church brethren during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Their son and home office employee, Jamie Schreiber, was along for the trip and captured footage from across the country of people on the street, sites in on the road and brethren in their homes and meeting places.



# UNITED NEWS



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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 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 15-17:** O.C. Bash, Southern California
- July 9:** Little Rock, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee, 50th anniversary.
- July 24-31:** Northwest Camp, Oregon
- July 29-31:** Mountain Region Women's Weekend, Allenspark, Colorado
- July 31-August 7:** Camp Pincrest, Missouri
- August 7:** Ocoee Rafting Trip, Tennessee

## Attention Graduating COLLEGE Seniors

### Send Us Your Bios!

**Congratulations!** We would like to feature the 2010 college graduates in the August *United News*. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions and send a photograph by **July 14, 2010**.

1. Graduate's Name
2. Parents' Names
3. Congregation and Pastor's Name
4. College 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 **July 14**.

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!

## UNITED STATISTICS

### Total Mail

Year to Date 2011  
vs. same period 2008-2010

- Internet Responses
- Total Mail (noncards)
- Subscription & Lit Cards

