

# UNITED NEWS

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## news

### AT A GLANCE

#### First Ever NYC Young Adults Weekend Planned in June

Take advantage of the opportunity of a lifetime to tour, study God's Word, worship, fellowship, dance and learn together in the world's most exciting city on the weekend of June 22-24, 2012. The theme for the weekend is "The City on the Hill—Your Limitless Future." All Church of God Sabbath-observing young adults, married and single from 18 to 35 years old are invited to a spectacular schedule of events.

After the inspiring themed sermon and services at the stunning Upper East Side 130-year-old Gothic Wallace Hall on Park Avenue, young adults will walk two blocks for a picnic hosted by the New York City young adults in the world famous Central Park. They will then be spiritually stimulated by participating in two interactive Bible studies in Central Park presented by two young adult couples. "Using God's Principles in and Ungodly World" will be presented by Christina and Eric Pate of Mountain View, California, and Seattle, Washington; they have been married for one year. Christina is a Microsoft account executive at Google, and Eric is just beginning his career as construction engineer at Kwitt. The second interactive Bible study, "Staying Pure in an Impure World," will be facilitated by Glen and Michelle Roscoe. They live in New York City and will be married on May 20, outside of Tampa, Florida. Michelle is studying international relations at the State University of New York, while Glen works in private infrastructure investment in New York. Glen graduated from the George Washington University in Washington, D.C., in 2008 with bachelor's degrees in international affairs and economics.

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# Good Works Program Moves Forward with Renewed Focus



# GOOD WORKS

To see ongoing Good Works projects, visit <http://goodworks.ucg.org>.

by **Lena VanAusdle**

In the fall of 2003, the United Church of God launched the Good Works program. This program provided a place and way for brethren to help others in the church. The United Church of God has always had an assistance fund built into the budget, but sometimes circumstances would arise that the general assistance fund wasn't budgeted for. Thus, the Good Works program was born; generally these projects provide for emergency or other unusual situations.

But why do we do it? Jesus said, "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer

Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me'" (Matthew 25:34-40).

God commands us to care for others, and over the last nine years we have tried to fulfill this edict. The projects have been varied, and recently there has been a lull in new projects. But we are "re-launching" this much-needed program with renewed vigor.

As we chart our course for the future and make our plans, it's helpful to look back on what we have already accomplished. Numerous projects have been funded and completed, and the

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#### BY THE NUMBERS

# 19,400

Print run for the Spring issue of Vertical Thought



news from

AROUND THE WORLD

## Lukers and Kubiks Travel to Africa for Unleavened Bread

by Victor Kubik

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Dennis and LeeAnn Luker and Victor and Beverly Kubik visited United Church of God brethren in South Africa, Malawi and Zambia. While far away from us, congregations in these countries are robust and growing. In January of 2011, the entire ministry in these countries resigned and left the brethren to wonder and pray about how they would be pastored. God has mercifully answered these prayers by reorganizing the leadership, awakening and strengthening the people. I put together a video, which tells much of the story. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/ucg-braai>

The trip was ambitious in that we made nine stops in 18 days. Because of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, there were extra days to congregate with the brethren. Also, we took time to visit brethren in their homes as well as see some of the outreach work that the church and LifeNets have been doing in these countries.

After arriving in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Lukers continued to East London and my wife Bev and I to Durban for the Sabbath of March 31. There was no



The Lukers, Kubiks and Kennebecks with the brethren at the braai in South Africa.

UCG East London until after the Feast of Tabernacles last year. Much of the church realized that the claims made against the United Church of God were false and came back.

On Sunday, April 1, a braai (essentially a picnic) was held for the Johannesburg brethren at the home of Jason and Monique Webster. While in Joburg, the Lukers saw the newly organized national

office from which literature and correspondence is sent. Richard and Emma Kennebeck were in South Africa at the Please see "Africa," page 11

Photo: Vic Kubik

## UCG Employees Kennebecks Assist South Africa Office in Computer Systems Upgrades

by Richard Kennebeck

My wife Emma and I had the wonderful opportunity to travel to South Africa during the spring holydays to help improve the processing and maintenance of literature requests and *Good News* subscriptions for the South African office. In late 2011, Jason Webster from Pretoria, South Africa, contacted me for help with the tremendous response they were getting from their local advertising efforts. Jason works full time as an engineer but was volunteering his time to maintain the *Good News* subscriptions. Isella Wallis, who is the lone office employee in South Africa, was diligently working to try to keep up with the large volume of weekly literature requests.

Much of the problem lay in the computer program that had been in place in South Africa for many years. It was antiquated and no longer provided the capabilities needed by the South African office. It was hoped that I would

be able to improve and streamline the computer programs to allow Isella to handle much of the workload with greater ease and provide better services to subscribers.

The trip was planned to occur over the spring Holy Days (which are in the fall in South Africa) so Emma and I would be able to spend some time with the local brethren in Johannesburg and in Cape Town. I had the opportunity to speak on the Sabbaths and Holy Days in Cape Town and Johannesburg and Emma provided special music. The brethren were so wonderful and warm. They made us feel so at home.

The South African office now has a much improved computer system that will help them maximize their resources while automating many processes that were previously done by hand. This new computer system will help them tremendously as their work grows. The relationships built also help us support and encourage each other as we do God's work on this earth. UN

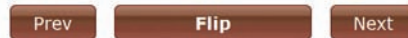
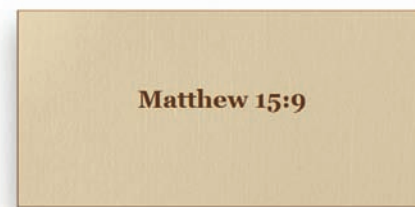
## UCG-Canada Media Efforts Update

by UCG-Canada Media Team

This report is a compilation by the media team and is meant to be an overview of what UCG-Canada is doing to preach the gospel. The media team works in conjunction with the national office to coordinate our media efforts. The team members are David Palmer, Dennis Horlick, Edwin van Pelt, Paul Wasilkoff and Anthony Wasilkoff. During the past year, we have added two new resources for our members and the general public on the UCG-Canada website ([www.ucg.ca](http://www.ucg.ca)). The first utility is the revised Bible reading plan. We have tweaked it to include a full listing of the books of the Bible. When the passage is shown, there is a feature for the text to be read via an audio element, which gives people the option of reading and hearing at the same time.

Also added this year were the Bible flash cards. The cards are based on flash cards used at Ambassador College and by local congregations in our church history. Our digital version is similar and is geared to an audience seeking an online version of the tool. The cards show a passage reference on

Online Bible Scripture Flash Cards



Bible Flash cards on the UCG.ca website.

the front. By clicking a button, the cards can be advanced forward and backward; they can be flipped to reveal the text of the passage on the back. As with the Bible reading schedule, the scripture cards include the audio element.

We actively continue to display ads through Google's network of search providers. Our primary ad features the booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. Based on the increased traffic Please see "UCG Canada," page 12

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# Profile: Tory Trone

Tory Trone was hired in March by the United Church of God to serve as a Web developer at the home office in Cincinnati, Ohio. He officially began on March 12 and works for the information technology (I.T.) department, interfacing between Richard Kennebeck's I.T. team and the Web development team of Tom Disher and Aaron Booth in the media department.

Tory was born and raised in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, east of the Sacramento, California, area. He lived there his entire life before moving to Cincinnati. He's the oldest of three children to his parents, Dirk and Kathy Trone, who serve as a deacon and deaconess in the Sacramento congregation. He has one brother, Nick, and one sister, Kari Blanchard, married to Ken Blanchard. He grew up in the Church and was baptized in February of 2004 at age 21.

After graduating high school half a semester early, he enrolled in some at-home college courses in civil engineering, but gave that up after a few semesters. He then worked for his dad's construction company, and later at a pizza joint part time.

When he decided to attend university again, he attended I.T.T. Tech, where he received an associate's degree in multimedia and a bachelor of science degree in digital entertainment and game design. Game development is a very competitive and saturated field, so he never was able to break into that industry. Although he had almost no training in Web technologies, he took an internship working for a website shop, which is where he started learning many of the Web skills he developed over

the next several years.

After that and another Web internship elsewhere, he took a job with an elevator company, developing tools for their internal use; for example he designed quotation tools, an accounting job tracker, inventory management tools, etc. He worked there for four years and was looking for something new, desiring to make his niche in Drupal programming, when the UCG job came available and his pastor alerted him to the opportunity.

He is experienced in programming PHP, JavaScript, JQuery framework, CSS, MySQL and Drupal.

He considers himself more of a generalist in approach to Web development, as opposed to having a focus in either front-end or back-end. Front-end developers focus on programming with technologies that creates the visual presentation of a site, where as back-end developers focus on programming server-side technology, where all the smarts and rules take place. In his experience working in small Web development teams, having skills in both front-end and back-end programming is almost a requirement.

He officially works in the I.T. department, but for the first several weeks on the job has been "on-loan" to the media department, working with Tom Disher and Aaron Booth on the Web team. Tom and Tory are



working together on revamping the current UCG.org site to make it ready for back-end technology upgrades, which will then let them focus on improving the front-end design and functionality, including mobile site functionality. His full responsibilities will include overseeing the overall Web development projects of the church, working with both the back-end server technologies as well as the front-end to ensure the best possible Web experience.

When asked about his role at the home office and his hopes for the job, Tory said: "I would like to take our site to the next level and reach more people by making the site more accessible. I'm very excited to be here and love coming into work everyday." UN

## FORWARD!

## Factual Foresight or Fictitious Hindsight?



**AARON DEAN**  
 Financial Services  
 Director

The world is full of information produced en masse by anyone anywhere and available to all. Being creatures of emotion, we often react before we know the truth. In 1985 the New York Mets signed a pitcher named Sid Fitch who could throw a 186 mile-per-hour fastball. In 1998 Alabama changed the value of pi to a more biblical 3.0. In 1986, the Eiffel tower was going to be dismantled and reconstructed in Euro Disney. In 2008 flying penguins were discovered. Of course all this information was released on April 1, and they were April fools jokes played on the public.

All these "facts" have something in common. They were believed by a great many people. It seems there is no end to gullibility. If it is published, or enough people

repeat it, it must be true.

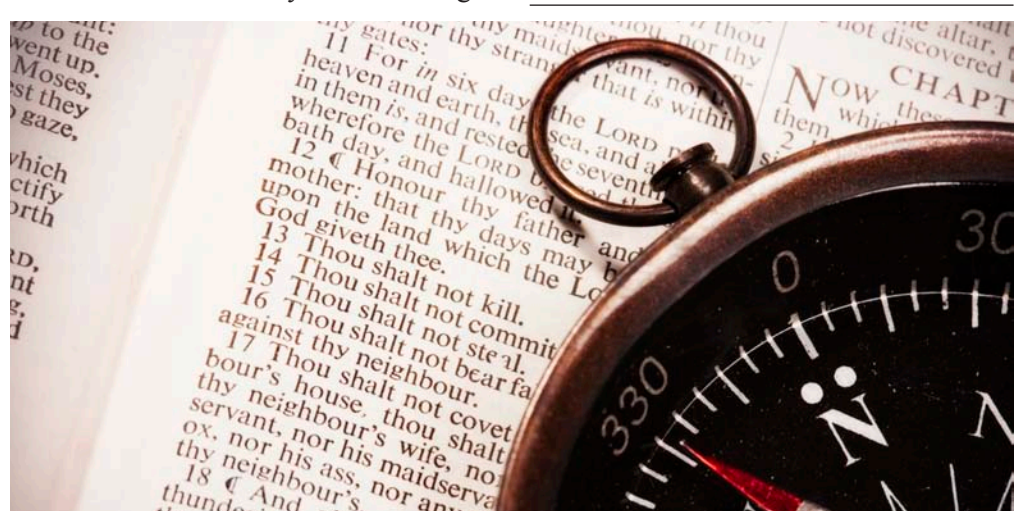
Years ago in Ambassador College a student gave a speech on how gullible Americans were. His speech was about J. Edgar Hoover. In the newspaper he had read how Hoover was a vacuum cleaner, and the FBI had a janitor named Edgar. So they created J. Edgar Hoover to clean up Washington and foisted him off on the public. The speech was given with passion in true sincerity.

Of course there really was a J. Edgar

Hoover, and the story was a column by Art Buchwald, the comedic writer. The student was rather embarrassed since the "gullible" person was himself, displayed before a live audience.

Have we ever been embarrassed by making decisions or taking courses of action built on emotional responses to "created" facts? 1 Thessalonians 5:21 says to "prove all things, hold fast to that which is true."

Please see "Foward," page 13





## What's Our Vision?

■ The Vision Statement of the United Church of God has been revised and submitted to the GCE for approval. What's the vision of the church? What part do we each have to play?

by Darris McNeely

A few years ago a longtime friend and member of the United Church of God told me that before she died she would like to be in a church organization whose members “truly love one another.” I still remember those words. For years they have haunted me.

Is the United Church of God such a church? Do all the members truly love one another? It is a hard question to consider. But it is a *necessary* question to consider.

The Council of Elders recently revised its vision statement for the strategic plan. It now reads as follows:

“The vision of the United Church of God is ‘A Church led by God’s Holy Spirit, joined and knit together by what every member supplies, with all doing their share and growing in love to fulfill God’s great purpose for humanity to bring many children to glory’ (Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 2:10).”

The Council decided on this statement after careful consideration and many hours of revision to the current Strategic

and Operations Plan. The entire plan, including this vision statement, will be placed before the General Conference of Elders at its annual meeting on May 6. Once ratified, this plan guides the daily operations of the church toward accomplishing its mission.

Everything in the plan is geared to accomplish the mission of the church. If the church carries out all areas of the plan, the body of people will move closer toward this stated vision. In other words, everything in the plan, and everyone involved in carrying out the plan, will be moving to the realization of this preferred vision—the place, or position, or condition, we desire.

Now look again at what the vision is. “A Church led by God’s Holy Spirit, joined and knit together by what every member supplies, with all doing their share and growing in love to fulfill God’s great purpose for humanity to bring many children to glory (Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 2:10).” This is a scripturally based vision.

How can we achieve this overarching vision? How can we in the United Church of God come to truly and deeply love one another as Christ loves us? It is a challenging and daunting task. But one we must rise to meet if we are to live up to Christ’s statement, “By this all will know you are My disciples, if you have love one for another” (John 13:34).

The good news is that Jesus Christ knows it can be done. This thought from



Ephesians 4:16 shows what in reality is *His* vision for His Church—of which He is the head (Ephesians 1:22). Christ and the Father have already envisioned the Church of God as being knit together with each person supplying something to the work of unity and growth in love. Imagine this: They already know what we are capable of doing and have provided the

welcome visitors and new people when they arrive? Do you keep in touch with those not able to attend, letting them know they are remembered and missed? Everyone in attendance at services needs to feel welcome and safe and able to find a role to play in the life of the congregation.

To live up to Christ’s vision, each mem-

*To live up to Christ’s vision, each member will need to know why they need to be involved and in regular attendance at Sabbath services.*

encouraging and inspiring vision showing the reality They see as the future.

Can we comprehend that God already sees this reality in place? Can we begin the work of moving toward this great vision and look around us today and see where and how we can make this happen?

It will take each member in each congregation working hard to make the place where the “spiritual family” comes together a place of peace—where everyone who walks through the door is welcomed and made to feel at home. Do you

ber will need to know why they need to be involved and in regular attendance at Sabbath services. We must understand we *need* to be there—not because we are indispensable or the most important, but because we need the support of others and in turn need to support each other.

You provide a link to someone each week by your presence, your words of encouragement, sometimes just by showing up. As a member, your presence alone can make a difference because you have

Please see “Vision,” page 12



Photo: photos.com



## Entering in the Middle of the Movie

■ Jesus summed up the Law as loving God and loving neighbor. But just what does love mean?

by Arthur Suckling

I love movies. Ever since I can remember from the first time I watched a movie I was fascinated. One of the first movies I can remember was one named *The Flame and the Arrow*. We kids got into the movie for one penny. We sat in the “gods” section of the theater, which was high up and alongside the screen at a 90-degree angle. After the movie, and on our way home we could buy one penny’s worth of chips from the local fish-and-chip shop.

Now, that tells you I’m not a teenager! We lived in a safe society where everyone knew everyone else, and the local owner of the fish-and-chip shop knew who we kids were. We were local kids from poor families who had little, and he kindly kept the price of a small bag of chips below market value when the price of potatoes went up. He knew we had only one penny.

Shortly after World War II ceased, money became a little more available, and we would go down to the “Flea Pit.” That was our name for the movie theatre that was old and run down. We could go in and out whether the movie had started or not. I clearly remember one time entering half way through the movie and had to sit over until it started again to see the beginning.

There are disadvantages to this approach! You don’t know the plot or the people who may be the “goodies” or the “baddies.” You don’t know what they had done. You have no idea of who’s who or what’s what, and this isn’t a good place to be for clarity or understanding about what’s going on in the story line.

An old professor once taught me that you can’t understand the New Testament (NT) until you understand the Old Testament (OT). Some decades went by before I fully comprehended the importance of his point.

I would like to explore this idea of having an understanding about a topic that begins at a specific time in history—in the middle of the movie, so to speak—that gives us an incomplete picture of that topic. To illustrate the point, I will explore the biblical concept of the word “love.”

There is one excellent example in the NT that I believe will clarify this whole concept and approach. That is the discussion between the scribe and Jesus about the greatest commandment of all. There are three renderings of this episode in the gospels (Matthew 22, Mark 12 and Luke 10). I recommend a review of all three

to obtain a synoptic or general overview.

Remember: The Gospels were written in the first century A.D. The entire cultural fabric of the early NT Church was “Jewish.” Its understanding of God’s way of life was Torah-based, i.e. based in the teachings and instructions of the Lord.

Now let us look at the example in Mark and the conversation between one scribe and Jesus. Briefly speaking, a scribe

create a discussion with foreseeable, negative consequences.

Jesus answered by citing, “The first of all commandments is to ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord [YHWH] our God is one’” (verse 29). This was followed with the two great principles of: love God, and love neighbor (verses 30-31). The scribe’s answer in verses 32-33 was said to be a wise answer by Jesus.

text in the OT. As mentioned before, the NT was not yet written when the scribe confronted Jesus with his question.

Going back to the original sources in the OT gives us the full background and understanding to this summary statement in the NT, which is about love. So what did love mean to the Hebrews?

### Love Your Neighbor

We find the “love your neighbor” phrase in Leviticus 19:18. The time was soon after the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. God is concrete in His instructions as to how we love our neighbor. It is based in our behavior. A full reading of this chapter reveals that in verses 9-18, God gives us many specific, concrete, objective behaviors that each reflects love for our neighbor.

When we read all of these verses in context (9-18), loving our neighbor really does come down to what we do to each other and how we treat each other. It is a summary statement just as Jesus used it. And it’s based on action. These actions determine our care for our fellow man.

Historically it is clear that Israel did not demonstrate the behaviors that led them to love their neighbor. In short, they were rebellious and stubborn and tempted God 10 times, finally refusing to go into the Promised Land (Numbers 14:22-29). They simply did not trust and obey the Lord God! So He allowed them to wander for 40 years in the wilderness and die off, preventing them from entering the Promised Land.

### Love God

The next example, to love God, was the first of the two “love commands.” We find this in Deuteronomy 6 in the famous *Shema*. Before we discuss this, it is important to know that Deuteronomy was written about 40 years after the “love your neighbor” principle in the Book of Leviticus, which is why I discussed that first. Only two individuals survived the wilderness wanderings, Joshua and Caleb (see Numbers 14).

Further, the title Deuteronomy means “second law,” meaning a repetition of the law. Moses wrote this to the people just prior to them entering the Promised Land. The first nine verses of chapter six places the responsibility on Israel to hear, *shema*, which also by default means to obey. But obey what? God’s statutes, commandments and judgments (verses 1-2). The responsibility to teach loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and might to the nation and individually to your entire family in daily living is given and summarized a little later with,

Please see “Movie,” page 13

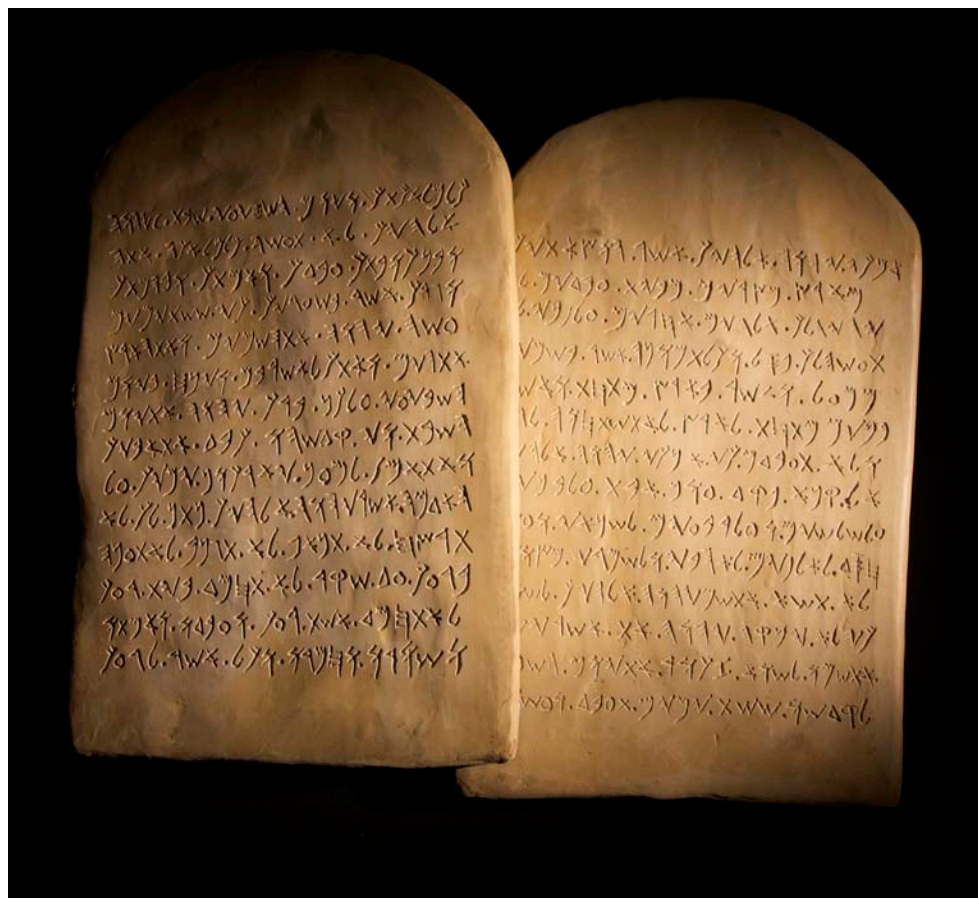


Photo: photos.com

*An old professor once taught me that you can't understand the New Testament (NT) until you understand the Old Testament (OT). Some decades went by before I fully comprehended the importance of his point.*

posed a trick question to Jesus: “What commandment is the foremost of all?” (Mark 12:28, NASB). Obviously, there were numerous commandments contained in the “Torah,” as well as many man-made rules in addition. This question was designed to place Jesus in the position of making a judgment that would

By only reading the account in the NT we are “entering into the middle of the movie,” so to speak. Why? Because we’ve got to understand the religious context of what “love” meant to that scribe and those reading this account in the first century. And that requires reading the original statements and their con-

# The Modesty Question: How Far is Too Far?

■ Feminine modesty is a recurring topic of debate in God's Church. Are we shopping in the wrong department?

by J'Non Whitlark

It doesn't matter what your size or shape, immodesty can happen anywhere. It can happen as a result of an intent to be provocative, or to get attention, or can result from naivete or even a wardrobe malfunction! After all, any outfit can become immodest when trying to wrangle an active toddler. I think I can safely say that I have probably been guilty of all of these at some point—as a teenager, single young adult, wife and mother.

What's so difficult about modesty is to pin down just how far fashion can be followed without causing problems—for ourselves or for others. How can we even know what "too far" means? Everyone has their own opinion, and of course they think they're right (it is, after all, kind of the defining feature of opinion).

But there is no black and white line on this issue. If there were, it would be so much easier, would it not? "Aha! This skirt is one inch too short, as God has designated in *The Book of Textiles*, chapter 10, verse 3." However, as He has done on so many other equally important issues, He expects us to work within the gray areas and find a way to do our best to make Him happy, and as a result, to not cause offense to our brethren if we can avoid it.

Well, no one said it was going to be easy, did they? Sorry. I can't give you easy. But here is some food for thought stemming from my own prior challenges (ahem, failures) in this area, otherwise known as *opportunities for growth*.

## Before you dress for the day, pray!

God is actually very interested in fashion and textiles. You see clothing referenced often in Scripture. Look for references to clothing as you read your Bible. He loves beautiful things—and He loves you. Period. So begin to ask God very specifically to *open your eyes* to see if you are displeasing Him through your mode of dress.

If you need some inspiration and encouragement, remember Matthew 20:33-34, where two blind men asked Jesus Christ for mercy as he passed by. "They said to Him, 'Lord, that our eyes may be opened.' So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him." How encouraging this is, on so many levels! They not only received physical sight, but they also received another kind of healing, since they immediately followed Him. When we ask God our Father for eyes to see our shortcomings, He can perform this miracle, too!

## Dressing Room Calisthenics Is Your Friend

Standing and turning slowly around a few times to see how it looks in the dressing room is no way to decide what to buy. You'll wear that outfit in a much more complicated reality, so why not put it to a rigorous test before bringing it home?

So, don't just stand there—unless you *want* to be deceived by that overly-complimentary dressing room mirror. Mimic all the things that you would practically be doing while wearing that outfit before you decide it's a keeper. What about when you go to work or to church, and are sitting down and standing up so often? (How's that skirt length cooperating now?)

And then there's getting in and out of the car, lunging to grab the toddler before he helps himself to the snack table, lifting your arms up to fix your windblown hair or hug a tall friend, or bending over to pick up the contents of your spilled purse. How would a sudden gust of wind affect your dignity in this outfit? Or if you plan to wear it to a dance, by all means vigorously dance the chorus to "YMCA" and twirl around a couple of times to see what happens. Whether or not you sing aloud while doing so is completely your call.

## Be Observant!

One way to find out if your mode of dress is potentially offensive is to become well-read in the body language of others. See how different people react when you wear certain things. If you are getting a lot of eyes lingering anywhere but your face when you encounter people at work, at the grocery store, or at church, be conscious of what that might mean to them, but also be aware of how that attention makes you feel. Do you feel pleased? Do you feel happier or more confident than you felt about yourself before?

Afterward, during your quiet time with God the Father, make it a point to talk to Him specifically about what you've observed in others and how you understand it. Tell Him openly what your feelings were, and ask Him to help you to *have the courage* to understand what He would prefer you to do, even if it's not the answer you want to hear! Ask Him specifically to give you the courage to either creatively modify or let go of any items that are inappropriate.

A word to the wise: If you get to the point of letting go, a very honest closet purge is quite liberating! Maybe it's not for everyone, but you may find that vocalizing through these purges may help you to stay strong. "Get thee behind me, temptingly cute blouse! Away with you, beautiful but inappropriate skirt!" And into the bag it goes—to someone who could possibly wear it without looking inappropriate, or to a thrift store. Or even into the trash! Do as your conscience allows.

Perhaps most importantly, when you talk with God, tell Him openly and honestly of the temptation to wear things that



Photo: photos.com

*God is actually very interested in fashion and textiles. You see clothing referenced often in Scripture. Look for references to clothing as you read your Bible. He loves beautiful things—and He loves you. Period.*

result in unhealthy attention. Ask Him to help you get to the root of that temptation and to help you conquer it! Ask Him to help you replace any shallow desires with the gift of seeing your worth and potential as He sees it. Ask Him to help you to discover fulfillment and pleasure in the beauty of His attention rather than in a temporary and unfulfilling flattery.

As someone who has come a distance in this area (and no doubt still has *miles* to go), I confess it was a long time before the key point to me wasn't about not embarrassing myself or my family and friends in public or trying not to offend my brethren. Eventually, I also wanted to dress in a way that was lovely and pleasing to my Father.

## And Before You Condemn Another...

At the start, I acknowledged that this is an issue that I've struggled with at every stage of my life. What I didn't mention was that after repenting of several levels of immodesty and doing the closet purges, the sin of self-righteousness was hard on those 3-inch heels. My attitude became very negative at seeing the provocative dress of others around me.

I remember feeling so annoyed by the immodesty of a female acquaintance and, probably more maddening to me at the time, a need to be adored by men. My reaction was to avoid contact whenever possible. I was not only irritated but

Please see "Modesty," page 12

# Announcements



**Alona Lynn Reynolds**



**Lily Evelyn Whitlark**



**Bill and Jean Ahner**

## Births

**Joshua and Tamara (Crow) Reynolds** are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter, **Alona Lynn Reynolds**. Alona was born on Sunday, Oct. 23, 2011, at 7:23 a.m., weighing 8 lbs., 4 oz. and 20 in. long. Mommy, Daddy and especially big brother Yoshiyahu are thrilled to welcome this cute new addition to the family!

Very happy grandparents are Fred and Sue Crow of San Jose, California, and Wilda and Vern McGaughey of McKinleyville, California. Joshua, Tamara, Yoshi and cute little Alona live near Sacramento in North Highlands, California.

**Mike and Davina Whitlark**, along with big brother Carson, feel blessed by the arrival of **Lily Evelyn Whitlark**. Lily was born on Dec. 14, 2011, at 12:58

p.m. She weighed 7lb., 11oz. and measured 20.5 in. long. Lily is the seventh grandchild of Richard and Nancy Velting and the fourth grandchild of Fred and Sue Whitlark, both of the Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, congregation. Lily is very sweet, easy going, and we are enjoying being a family of four!

## Engagements

Thomas and Wanda McKinney, of Vanceburg, Kentucky, are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, **Esther McKinney** to **Jonathan Magee**, the son of Conway and Juanita Magee of Hazlehurst, Mississippi. The couple is planning a June wedding, and will live in Cincinnati, Ohio.

## Anniversaries

On Sabbath, Mar. 10, 2012, the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, congregation presented a beautiful floral arrangement to **Bill and Jean Ahner** in honor of their 50th wedding anniversary. Bill and Jean of Slatington, Pennsylvania, were married Mar. 10, 1962, in Leighton, Pennsylvania.

They have three daughters: Holly, wife of Tom Poore of Tucson, Arizona, Chrysse, wife of Marc Eden of Swannanoa, North Carolina, and Karol, wife of Gene Keeney of Slatington. They were blessed with one grandson, Matthew Stevens of Slatington.

Bill is retired from the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and Jean is retired from Sears, Whitehall, Pennsylvania.

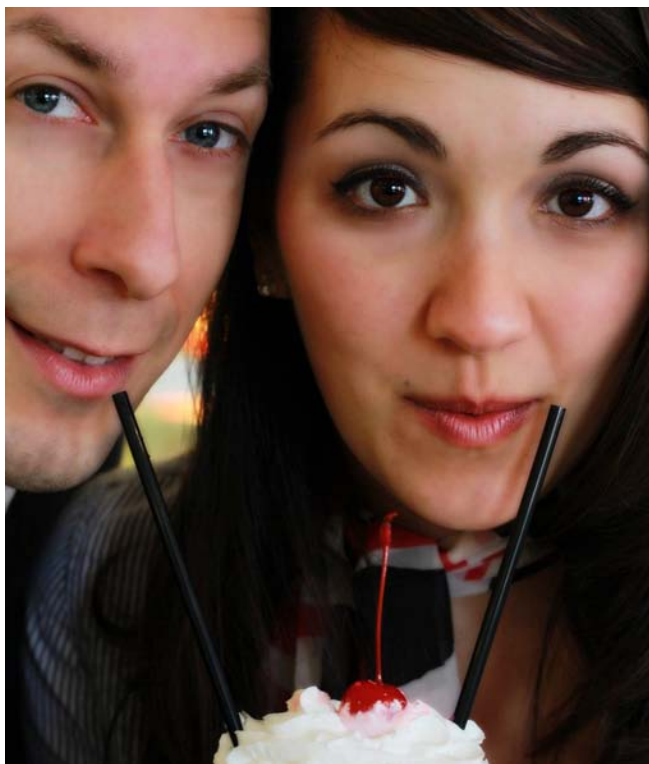
Bill and Jean were baptized at Mt.

Pocono, Pennsylvania, on Nov. 1, 1969.

## Obituaries

**Luke Anderson**, 21, of Murray, Kentucky, died Wednesday, May 25, 2011, from injuries sustained in a vehicular accident.

Luke was born Jan. 18, 1990, in Kankakee, Illinois. He was a 2009 graduate of Calloway County High School, having a previously attended Murray High School, and was attending Murray State University. He was a carpenter with Donnie Roberson Construction and attended the vocational school for carpentry. He was a member of the United Church of God in Paducah, Kentucky. Luke loved sports, especially basketball, adding soccer his senior year. Also, his senior year, he was voted "Most Dependable" boy his class.



**Jonathan Magee and Esther McKinney**



**Luke Anderson**



**Dale Fogelson**

Luke is survived by his mother, Teresa Anderson, of Murray, Kentucky; his father, David Anderson Sr., of Kankakee, Illinois; three sisters, Angela Mitchell and husband, Rico, of Sharon, Tennessee, Davina Anderson of Kankakee, Illinois, and Teela Odom of Murray, Kentucky; one brother, David Anderson Jr., and wife Deisy of Kankakee, Illinois; and two nephews.

Luke was a fine young man who was deeply liked, loved and respected. He set a great example and was held in high esteem by family and friends. His family, his friends and classmates and his boss bore testimony to such at the funeral. Luke's light has shone brightly. He was known for his integrity, dedication and convictions. He had grown up in the Church, attended a number of youth camps where he excelled with honors, and on Nov. 15, 2010, he was baptized into the Body of Christ. He was a young man of promise, on fire for the things of God. He was songleading and opening and closing with prayer. It was just a matter of time until he would have been giving sermonettes. He had plans to attend ABC sometime in the not-too-distant future. Though young, Luke was making very rapid growth, fueled by God's Spirit and zeal. He will be a wonderful asset in God's eternal family and Kingdom!

When Luke would leave home, he most often would use the Italian phrase *arrivederci*, which means "until we meet again." Yes, until we meet again at the resurrection. May God hasten that day!

**Dale Fogelson** of Phoenix, Arizona, died on Sept. 4, 2011. He was spending the morning hunting with his family when he had a heart attack. Dale was a faithful member of God's Church, attending from childhood as a second generation Christian. He passed his faith on to two generations before his death.

Dale was born Apr. 23, 1955, and lived in Zumbrota, Minnesota, where he grew up and worked on a family farm. He had numerous state titles in track and field and in Y.O.U. sports. He moved in the 1970s to Arizona where he married Vicky Paisley and raised his three sons. Dale also worked as an RV mechanic.

He was well known for hitting home runs on the church softball team. Dale loved the outdoors and he was an avid hunter. His grandchildren knew him for his hugs, pillow fights and the time he spent with them. Everyone that Dale knew loved him and many considered him a close friend.

Dale is survived by his wife Victoria; his three sons who were his pride and joy, Brent, Clint and Abram; his mother and father, Sheri and Wayne; two brothers; and eight grandchildren—all whom he loved without limit.

So many other friends and extended family loved him greatly for his caring nature, his competitive spirit, his desire to help others and his love for God. A memorial service was held by Randy Schreiber in Phoenix, Arizona. He is greatly missed, and we look forward to seeing him again very soon.

Our beloved **Charles Oldroyd** of the Tampa, Florida, congregation died Nov. 23, 2011, at the age of 100. He was born in Elmira, New York, on June 10, 1911, the son of John and Sarah Oldroyd.

The Tampa congregation had honored him on June 11th with a special cake and refreshments to celebrate his 100th birthday and he was thrilled to see his picture and mention of the occasion in the *United News*!

Charles and his wife Betty celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary on June 7, and the 52nd anniversary of their baptism on July 16th. Until a short time ago, he and Betty were always active in church functions. He could be found in the fellowship hall taking attendance each Sabbath before services.

Charles is survived by his wife Betty Jo and children Michael (Ann) Blencowe and Lee (Judy) Blencowe. He is also sur-



**Georgia Rice**

vived by his grandchildren, Dale, Dean, Rachel and Donn, and great-grandchildren, Brandon, Kaylee, Courtnee, Christina, Tyler, Jadea and Teagen.

Charles was a special person and a loved and dedicated member of the Tampa congregation. He will be greatly missed.

**Otha Samuel Peeples** of Goldthwaite, Texas, died Feb. 23, 2012. Otha lived a long life and was over 100 years of age at his death. He and his wife Mary Lee were baptized in 1973 and began attending God's Church in Abilene, Texas.

Otha was a cowboy who worked on ranches in West Texas and loved horses. As a young boy he taught himself to trick ride and to ride Roman style (standing on the back of two horses while jumping over barriers), and he displayed his skills in rodeo arenas around the West Texas area. He also worked for the Texas Animal Health Commission as a livestock inspector and was a member of the Pecos County Sheriff's Posse.

He was a faithful member in the Church until his death, and he loved the family atmosphere and the fellowship of the brethren. He displayed an abundant love for his children and would spend time talking to them about the "old days." He is survived by his wife and two children, Howard Peeples of Mena, Arkansas; and Carol Warlick of Goldthwaite.

**Georgia Rice** was a longtime church member in the Bloomington/Normal, Illinois, congregation. She died Jan. 31, 2012, at St. Joseph Memorial Hospital, Bloomington, Illinois, at the age of 78.

She was born Mar. 13, 1933, in Eldorado, Illinois, a daughter of Raymond and Edith (Storey) Brooks. She was married to Donald Rice on Jan. 26, 1952. He preceded her in death on May 11, 1992.

She is survived by three sons, Richard (Betty) Rice, Michael (Della) Rice, Ronald (Patricia) Rice; and two daughters, Sharon McVay, Karen (David) Pryor; as well as 11 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Georgia and her husband were baptized in 1968. She enjoyed ceramics and plastic canvas. Georgia loved visiting with the brethren and bestowing her arts and crafts



**Ida Wright**

as gifts upon her Church family.

She was very generous and loving. The time she spent visiting with friends and family were times she held very dear. Georgia will be greatly missed!

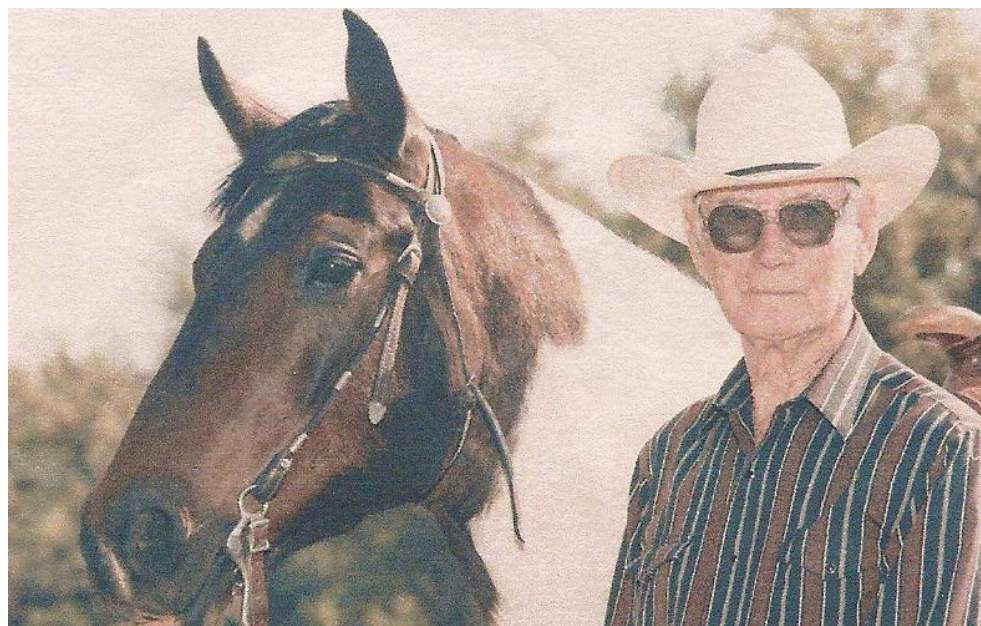
A long-time and faithful member of God's Church in the Spokane, Washington, congregation, **Ida Wright**, died on Feb. 9, 2012, at age 92. She was born Oct. 3, 1920, in Hot Springs, South Dakota, and spent her childhood in Big Timber, Montana.

Ida married David Wright in 1942, in Walla Walla, Washington. She was baptized in the early 60s. She had one child, Bill, from her first marriage and four children, Mary, Greg, Leonard and Edith, from a later marriage to John Raschko. Mary died shortly after birth. She is survived by John, their children, one sister, 13 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. She was a hard worker, a good mother and homemaker.

Ida was a wonderful example of being totally committed to God's truth and never wavered from it in spite of very difficult circumstances in her life. Although she was unable to attend church services in her later years, she always made sure to be on the phone hookup and would listen to additional sermons during the week. She suffered from macular degeneration and dizziness, which made it difficult to get around but she always made sure to attend Passover services. Ida never lost her sense of humor and she kept a sharp mind to the end.

Ida died peacefully at her home. Her son Greg was her caregiver for over 11 years and was a very loving helper for her, which the whole family appreciated very much.

**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*.



**Otha Peeples**





# Local Church UPDATES

## 15th Twin Cities Families for God Weekend Draws Families from 12 States!

Invite them and they will come! The Twin Cities congregation had the pleasure of welcoming families from a record 12 states! Never before had brethren travelled from so many states to participate in the weekend's activities and events, which took place March 2-4, 2012. Those unable to make the journey could join in the Friday night Bible study, Sabbath services, as well as the interactive workshops via live webcast and telephone hookup.

The theme for the weekend was "Joined and Knit Together," taken from Ephesians 4:12-16. The participants celebrated this milestone weekend in a spirit of truly being joined and knit together as the very people of God. UCG president Dennis Luker was the weekend's keynote speaker.

Brian Shaw, pastor of the Minneapolis/St. Paul, Little Falls, and Duluth, Minnesota, congregations, kicked off the weekend by conducting the Friday-night Bible study entitled "Bound and Knit Together: A review of the unifying principles in the fourth chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians."

Dennis Luker provided rich spiritual food with his sermon "Joined and Knit Together by God's Love." After a brief coffee break, Brian and ReNae Shaw and Dave and Jolinda Schreiber, who serve the La Crosse, Wisconsin, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Southern Minnesota congregations, as well as the brethren in Sri Lanka and India, conducted two concurrent interactive workshops.

The Shaws presented an interactive seminar entitled "His & Her Thinking: Relational implications of gender differences in God's design of the human brain." The Schreibers facilitated an interactive workshop entitled "Joined & Knit Together: Part of being joined and knit together is for the body to edify itself in love." In the seminar, the Schreibers explored the ways we can individually and collectively edify the body of Christ.

The Marriott catering service opened up the evening by serving a delectable white-linen, three-course meal to the adults and children, and also separately to the teens attending the prom. The two well-attended signature events were the fun show and the teen prom.

The fun show provided an evening for everyone to showcase their talents, pas-



Teens gather for a photo at the 15th Twin Cities Families for God Weekend.

sions and abilities with song, music, readings and more to the delight of the many attending the event! At the same time, a majestic moment awaited all the fair maidens and gents at the "Royal Ball," the theme for the teen dinner and prom. 32 ladies and 22 gentlemen, including 7 graduating seniors, heeded the call to attend this memorable event.

Due to last year's record participation and back by popular demand, Sunday's activity again took place at the Water Park of America—America's biggest indoor water park showcasing the natural wonders of Minnesota. A fellowship room with direct water park access provided the perfect haven for all non-swimmers.

However, the highlight of the weekend was the early Sabbath morning baptisms of Cody Martin and Kaylee Randle! With one baptism last year and two this year; Brian Shaw noted that we might have three or four baptisms next year to continue this trend. Who knows?

*David & Stephanie Mörker*

## Cincinnati Women's Enrichment Weekend a Big Success

On March 16-18, more than 160 women from 14 states and one international area gathered at the Blue Ash Embassy Suites for the Cincinnati area's first women's enrichment weekend. All the activities built on the theme "Understanding You, Understanding Me—Building Meaning-

ful Relationships."

Most of the ladies, aged teens to 80s, arrived on Friday afternoon to check in and enjoy an evening reception with a chance for food and fellowship. After the reception everyone gathered in the conference room for opening comments by event coordinator LeeAnn Luker, wife of UCG president Dennis Luker. Connie Seelig and Joy Jones then shared memories and highlights of past conferences they had attended.

After a lovely Sabbath brunch, services were conducted by Mr. Luker who spoke on the value of women in God's plan. Inspirational music throughout

the day added to the "Feast-like" atmosphere. The afternoon session helped all the women better understand their own personalities and those of the people around them. Everyone learned to maximize their strengths and minimize their weaknesses.

A delicious banquet was held Saturday evening followed by round table discussions on the different personality types of famous Bible characters.

Sunday morning opened with a very funny yet thoughtful skit clearly showing the different personalities and how they work with each other. This was followed by the keynote speech given



The skit performed at the Cincinnati Women's Enrichment Weekend.



Presenters at the Garden Grove Women's Enrichment Weekend.



Norma Nelson at the Minnesota Winter Social and Youth Day.

by Lisa Fenchel on how God made all kinds of people who can add their own beauty to His Church. After Mrs. Luker wrapped up the weekend, all the ladies joined together to sing the hymn, "One Faith, One Love". The words of that hymn, "Our many lives are woven, fitly blended as tapestry created by Thy hand," certainly summed up the entire weekend for all.

*Debbie McNeely*

## Garden Grove Hosts Vibrant 11th Annual Women's Weekend

A total of 91 enthusiastic ladies from California and Arizona enjoyed the 11th annual Women's Enrichment Weekend. The weekend was hosted by the Garden Grove congregation on Feb. 10-12 at the beautiful Embassy Suites in Santa Ana,

California, with the theme "Instruments of Peace."

The main portion of our women's weekend began with morning Sabbath services. The sermon by the Garden Grove pastor Mario Seiglie, "Sowing Peace to Reap Peace," set the theme-related tone. The sermon was preceded by exceptional special music selections with three duets and an ensemble of women from various areas.

The theme was expanded in two Sabbath-afternoon sessions. Deborah Barr in an overview explained the depth and various aspects and dimensions of peace. Carol Wallauch expanded on those concepts, illustrating practical ways to diffuse conflict with others. Anna Moore added concepts of peace through communication and organization and by sharing examples of two special ladies. A delicious banquet meal together capped off the day.

On Sunday morning, six ladies shared parts of their lives with lessons learned.

Laura Peabody gave examples of people as "instruments of peace" in her life. Gloria Taylor explained what it was like landing on one's feet after difficult times and trials. Vikkie Garnant shared about coming to know God and the excitement of knowing God's way works. Madeleine Fiske told about her calling and coming to Ambassador College. Carolina Clark explained her realization that sometimes we have to "fight" to stand up for our convictions to have peace. And Ingrid Helge shared how a simple thing as a cheese-cake helped reconcile with her father.

After lunch together on Sunday afternoon, Pam Hunt helped us learn how to better support one another in trials and Jean Updegraff shared inspiring examples of people who had a deep inner peace even in times of war. Sylvia Kennedy wove the presentations together as our enthusiastic moderator.

A wonderful spirit, energy and vibrancy permeated the weekend as the ladies appreciated learning how to apply the

fruit of peace in their lives, fellowship and bonding with other ladies throughout this special weekend.

*Jean Updegraff*

## Excellent Youth Day and Winter Social Held in Southern Minnesota

On Feb. 25, 2012, the Southern Minnesota congregation hosted the 15th Annual Youth Day and Winter Social at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch near Stewartville, Minnesota. This year's theme was Hawaiian. Services started at 3 p.m., and the young people participated in song leading, opening and closing prayers, three short sermonettes and special music.

After a wonderful sermon given by our pastor David Schreiber, reminding our



Greensboro, North Carolina, Double Anniversary Celebration. Alvin and Brenda Walker (left) celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. Marshall and Doris Emery (right) celebrated their 60th anniversary.



Derek Riess, Eagle Scout



Kayla Nelson and grandfather Lloyd Nelson at the Minnesota Winter Social.

youth of the dangers of alcohol, drugs, smoking and other peer pressure risks, a Hawaiian meal was served. The Luau meal included smoked brisket on a bun, salads, fruits and veggies and tropical desserts.

After the meal, families enjoyed sleigh rides and the youth participated in snow tubing. Following those events a variety show was enjoyed by young and old. The variety show included a variety of acts; a piano piece, a song, many skits, a hula dance, a cat story, some jokes and the limbo.

Our high attendance set a record for this annual event: 142. Those in attendance came from the Southern Minnesota, La Crosse, Wisconsin, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and from the Twin Cities congregations. The Minnesota weather was clear, cool, sunny and perfect for travel.

The social was a huge success because of the efforts of so many who volunteered to serve their brothers and sisters. Everyone went home inspired and smiling, in spite of being tired after a wonderful day with family.

*Dagmar Howe*

## Double Anniversary Celebration Held in Greensboro, North Carolina

After church services on Feb. 18, 2012, the Greensboro, North Carolina, congregation threw a surprise double wedding anniversary celebration for Marshall and Doris Emery and Alvin and Brenda Walker.

This was the 60th wedding anniversary for Marshall and Doris Emery, who were married on Feb. 6, 1952, in Bennettsville, South Carolina. The Emerys had three children, Melissa Allen, Venita Journey and Tim Emery (Venita and Tim both died in 2001). They had two granddaughters, Andrea Allen and Joanna Allen (Joanna died in 1991). Marshall and Doris became baptized members of the Church in 1963 and 1964. They have served faithfully as deacon and deaconess for 40 some years in the Greensboro and Asheboro congregations. They attended with United Church of God in Asheboro at its beginning in 1995 and continue to serve in the Greensboro con-

gregation.

For Alvin and Brenda Walker, this was their 40th wedding anniversary. They were married in Jamestown, North Carolina, on Feb. 5, 1972. Alvin and Brenda were baptized into the Church in 1969 and 1971. Their daughter Kimberly and her husband Dan Preston are Church members in Cincinnati, Ohio, and they have given two grandsons to the Walkers, Aaron and Andrew. Alvin and Brenda are serving faithfully as deacon and deaconess in the Greensboro congregation.

For the celebration, the congregation provided special dishes of food and gifts as tokens of our love and appreciation for these two couples. There was also a toast to many more happy anniversaries for the Emerys and Walkers. During the toast, Marshall joked that he and Doris would give it a try for another 60 years—and if it didn't work, they'd just throw in the towel!

*David Mills*

## Southern Minnesota Member Attains Eagle Scout Rank

Derek Riess, son of Tracy and Lori Riess of Stewartville, and former member of Boy Scout Troop 56 of Stewartville, has earned the Eagle Scout rank. Eagle Scout is the highest rank attainable in the Boy Scouting program of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). Only about five percent of the memberships attain this award.

Derek served as chaplain aide, patrol leader and assistant senior patrol leader and was a member of the Order of the Arrow. For his eagle project, he planned and constructed a movable sheltered bench for Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch. He is a 2011 graduate of Stewartville High School and currently attends Minnesota State University in Mankato.

Derek also attends Sabbath services at the United Church of God Southern Minnesota congregation with his parents and his three siblings: Alex, Hannah and Dylan Riess. Derek has been very active in the local church youth programs and has also served as a staff member at the United Church of God preteen camp in Southern Minnesota for many summers. Derek was recognized and honored for his achievement by his Church family at youth day on the Sabbath of Feb. 25.

*Dagmar Howe*

**Local Church Updates:** Send us news and events from your local congregation! Check with your pastor and have him forward what you write. 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*.



news from

AROUND THE WORLD

## Kubiks and Lukers Visit Southern Africa

Continued from page 2

same time to help Isella Wallis, the office manager, with database matters.

On April 2, we joined again with the Lukers and continued to Lilongwe, the capital of Malawi. We visited with a number of brethren, including Lester Njewa, whose husband died the previous Thursday. We made a stop and baptized two people at ABC (African Bible College). The Julius Kachali family came 250 miles by bus from Mzuzu in the north and we enjoyed a dinner with them that evening, along with the deacon Haiton Thungula and Wordsworth Rashid. There are no elders currently in Malawi, where there are 150 people in attendance.

On Wednesday, we held an afternoon Bible study with the Lilongwe brethren, and then on Thursday night kept the Passover with them.

The next morning the travelers flew to Blantyre in the south of Malawi and kept a very wonderful Night to Be Much Observed hosted by deacon Gracious Mpilangwe and his wife Loney. Several families were invited for a delicious dinner and evening of fellowship.

On the First Day of Unleavened Bread, an energetic welcome was given the Lukers. The night before, the unpopular president of Malawi, Bing Mutharika, died of a heart attack. The country has been in economic chaos with rising prices, a thriving black market and long, long lines for fuel. Two of our members work in the media, Timothy Kamilaya for the national *The Nation* newspaper and Osborn Liyawo for Malawi Broadcasting. After services, he received an e-mail confirming the death of the president and the installation of the vice-president, now the second female leader of an African nation. That evening, one of our friends, the leader of the People's Progressive Movement party, stopped by to visit at a guest house. He had been the leader of the opposition coalition in Malawi. They have been helpful to us over the years in Malawi with their church and humanitarian work.

On Sunday, April 8, LeeAnn Luker hosted a women's seminar at the conference room of the guest house. Fourteen ladies attended as various questions and topics were discussed. One lady traveled nine hours by bus to come. The ladies really enjoyed this event!

From Blantyre, we all went back to Lilongwe, as that was the only city from which we could proceed to the next country, Zambia.

On the day we were to fly to Zambia, we discovered that the flight was cancelled. Fortunately, this once a week

flight was rescheduled for the next day. Kenya Airways put us up at the best hotel in Lilongwe, where we had to wait 24 hours.

We arrived in Zambia on Thursday, April 12. Pastor Wilson Nkoma and wife Dorothy along with 32 members of the Lusaka congregation very warmly greeted us at the airport. From the airport in Lusaka, we had to wait about four hours for our flight up north to Ndola, where we would stay with Derrick and Cherry Pringle and visit the Mufulira church.

The stay at the Pringles' estate was delightful. On the Holy Day, April 13, Derrick drove UCG's church bus, collecting brethren along the way to Mufulira services. The bus capacity is 28, but we filled it up with 42 that we dropped off at the church location. Then we continued on in a different direction, collecting more than 20 others and bringing them back for services. After services, Mr. Luker met with the men and spoke about Christ-like service, and Mrs. Luker met with the ladies.

Then we reversed the process, taking the brethren back to where they picked them up—a two-hour process.

The next day, we flew back to Lusaka and services with the congregation there. A highlight was the ordination of five deacons.

We have about 400 in attendance in Zambia, a country about the size of Texas. The deacons ordained were already leaders of groups of people throughout the country. Those ordained were Armstrong Maninga in Kasumpa, Maxwell Kasakabantu in Nalubanda North, Jonathan Katapya in Mapoko, Luke Banda in Lusaka and Alfred Siame in Isoka, located 600 miles northeast. This congregation of about 80 was cut off by the previous pastor, and we were happy to bring them back.

On Sunday, there were greatly appreciated meetings with the Lukers. A women's seminar was held, followed by a spokesman's club, which both men and women attended.

Monday, April 16, was our last day in Africa as we flew from Lusaka back to Johannesburg and then all the way back to the United States.

We were thrilled to be with so many of our brethren. We encouraged one another. Our brethren in these countries have a lengthy history with the Church, and many go back to days when the churches were administered from the United Kingdom. We had a rich common history.

This was a special journey that will be remembered forever. **UN**

# UCG-Canada Media Efforts Update

Continued from page 2

to our Bible Reading Schedule, we have also created a new ad targeting keywords related to Bible reading schedules.

In the 12-month period Mar. 1, 2011, through Feb. 29, 2012, there were just under 38,000 visitor sessions with a daily average of over 100 visitors to our UCG-Canada website. For the same period one year previous, the total was 33,606 visitor sessions with a daily average of 92 representing an increase of 10 percent.

The website was the subject of many search queries over the same time period. We have recorded over 17,000 searches. Google produces nearly 80 percent of our search engine referred traffic.

Since May of 2011, our websites have processed 1,200 requests. Approximately 10 percent of the requests were bound for

countries beyond the continent. A list of countries served from UCG-Canada's website include: Australia, Belgium, Benin, Bermuda, Brazil, Eritrea, France, Georgia, Ghana, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Ireland, Romania, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The balance of the requests is split, almost in half, between Canada and the United States. Each month we process nearly 120 requests.

We are using the UCG-Canada websites in many ways to preach the gospel and prepare a people. It is encouraging to

see continued use of existing material and to see use of new utilities online.

We have received nearly 22,000 responses due to the *Beyond Today* program since it began airing almost six years ago. The first year we were on air, we averaged just under 40 responses per week. Over the past year, we have averaged nearly 129 per week. Programs discussing finances, prophecy, understanding the Bible, death, heaven and hell usually bring in the most responses.

It is interesting to note that when the airtime on Vision TV changed to half an hour later, the audience increased by 30 percent for the next four weeks. The audience has consistently been 15-20 percent higher since that time. In addition, the average number of people requesting lit-

erature is about 50 percent higher than the old time. By making the change in time, we were also able to secure a lower rate, which allowed us to stay on Grace TV.

It is reported by Nielsen TV Ratings that our age demographic is getting younger with only 50 percent of our viewers over 50. In the early days of the program, 70 percent of our viewers were over 65. This is due to changes in the program, change in airtime and because we follow a program that attracts a larger and younger audience. Recently, the home office launched an initiative to increase the circulation of *Bonnes Nouvelles*. While the intent was to increase the magazine subscriptions in other French-speaking countries, a significant benefit has been realized in Canada. In the first two months of this year, our subscriber list increased about 140 percent. That increase has continued necessitating the need to request additional magazines to cover the needs. **UN**

## What's Our Vision?

Continued from page 4

the Holy Spirit and a key fruit of that spirit is love. If a smile and a greeting, a hug and a handshake, a listening ear and well-placed word are anything at all, they are expressions of care, concern and love. God has a way of taking even the simplest and smallest of expressions and magnifying them in others' lives by the power of the Holy Spirit.

You and I will have to come to know that we need to come and hear the truth taught each week because it is a lifeline to spiritual sanity in a world that works overtime to strip away faith and belief.

It will require every pastor, elder and

*Jesus Christ is making it happen each week as the bride is prepared for the future marriage.*

member to faithfully teach the truth of the Bible and make it come alive in the hearts and minds of every man, woman and child in each week's service. God must speak through us all in word and deed. When we take seriously this collective responsibility, we will open ourselves to become vessels through which God's power can flow out to others.

The good news is that *you* have a part in

making this vision a reality. Jesus Christ is making it happen each week as the bride is prepared for the future marriage. We can choose to be a part of it and make it happen where we are and wherever we go.

It is not a mistake we chose the name "United" as our description of this organization within the body of Christ. Despite the sorting and sifting of the past 17 years,

God has preserved this church. Today we still remain standing with an even firmer commitment to the mission of preaching the gospel and preparing a people. Our vision is even clearer. We know where we need to be and how to get there. Now is the time for each of us to rededicate ourselves to the collective calling and duty laid out before us.

I still hear my friend's words: "Before I die I want to be in a church whose members truly love one another." Let's begin today to achieve this vision. We have taken large steps in the direction of the vision—but the vision requires an ongoing effort. Let us increase our clarity of the vision Jesus presented—and with God's help make that vision our life's work. **UN**

## The Modesty Question: How Far is too Far?

Continued from page 6

began to despise her *for doing something of which I have also been guilty!*

After a time, God mercifully showed me that my attitude was wrong. But since I still found it difficult to be in her company, it was evidently going to take more than just realizing I was wrong. It actually took a miracle.

In the same vein as "I believe! Please help my unbelief!" there is a point at which we need God to help us make a leap which we cannot make on our own.

So ensued a very earnest prayer asking my Father, who somehow loves me despite my many annoying traits and hurtful actions, to please open my heart to love her.

And so He did. The change was almost immediate. We certainly can't limit God to showy miracles. He can also quietly unlock a heart that seems to be an impenetrable fortress.

So before you condemn one of our brethren for immodesty, please consid-

er not only the outward symptom that is immodesty, but also the underlying causes. In 1 John 3:16, we read that if someone "sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" The context is a physical one, but should it not also apply to intangible needs?

Perhaps if we keep ourselves from reacting with a dismissive or condemning attitude, we might discover ways to help fill an emotional need that is fueling this outward behavior. Not that we can be the only solution or "fix" someone, but we might find constructive ways to give positive attention and friendship. And if our opinion is asked directly, of course we should be open and honest, but also gentle.

The parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18 is a good reminder for us to have "compassion on [our] fellow servants" just as God has had pity on us. Consider how merciful our Father has been in our own struggles to overcome our human nature. Remember the

patience that He has shown through our many stages of development, and the incredible joy that comes in finally having the *heart* to do His will.

For me it took a long time to get to that point, and once there it became apparent that having a heart to obey God was really another starting point. It seems there are enough gray areas and weightier matters to keep us all very busy for our entire lives.

### How Far Is Too Far?

The question posed in the title of this article is actually not a very good one. It may seem perfectly helpful at first glance, but when you stop to consider the matter deeply, this is not really the attitude we should have about *any* challenge we face as Christians. Instead of trying to find out how much we can possibly do without crossing over into sin, a better attitude would lead us to continually search for ways we can better please God and serve His people (1 John 3:18-23). Going above and beyond the baseline of the law means not only loving our fellow brethren, but also being conscious of how we present this temple for the Holy Spirit of the Living God! **UN**

*In the same vein as "I believe! Please help my unbelief!" there is a point at which we need God to help us make a leap which we cannot make on our own.*

# Entering in the Middle of the Movie

Continued from page 5

“Man shall not live by bread alone: but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

The scribe understood all this background and context in the conversation with Jesus. In turn, Jesus concluded with an incredible response saying, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God” (Mark 12:34).

This remarkable statement by Jesus indicates in the light of the two principles in Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 6 what our actions, our behavior and our deeds should be in order to demonstrate love! It is not our emotions!

This is an astounding truth. We have been inundated with the notion from every conceivable source of entertainment and literature that love is an emotion! This is because we enter in the middle of the movie! Where did we get that idea, when Scripture clearly says love is action, or behaviorally based?

The idea of emotion being love comes from ancient Greek thought and philosophy. By accepting this, we enter into the movie in the middle, and that voids the original biblical understanding of love.

(John 14:15). Reworded, “If you prefer (love) or have chosen (love) Me you will do what I say.” Obedient, objective behavior as described in God’s laws is necessary in order to demonstrate godly love in our lives.

The Hebrew concept of love is entirely the opposite to the Greek concept in which emotion comes first then commitment. The Hebrew thinking is that emotion is the outcome or result of behavior.

Loving God and one’s neighbor are actions based in behavior and deeds. Obeying Godly principles of behavior in our relationships are the motivators that stimulate emotions and commitment. These feelings and passions are the outcomes of our good actions. Viewed from a verb perspective, our actions speak louder than words.

The emotions of caring come from doing what God determines is good and right objectively. There is no difference or discrimination in living God’s way in its application to others, whoever they are! The story of the good Samaritan demonstrates this clearly. The Samaritan, despised by the Jews because of his ethnic background, helped a man beaten

*Our behavior and our deeds should be in order to demonstrate love! It is not our emotions! This is an astounding truth.*

Why? Because we have been taught that love is viewed from an emotional basis only. The inheritance we have from the Greek language places love solely in the emotional domain. Note the three Greek words used to describe love as emotion. *Philia*, brotherly love, *Éros*, erotic love and *Agápe*, godly or committed love.

These are all emotionally based.

The Greek culture taught that emotion is sought first and after that comes commitment. This love is seen and demonstrated by attraction, feelings and emotion and not necessarily in behavior. The need to sustain emotion was necessary or the relationship failed. When emotions change in a relationship due to behavior, emotion can quickly turn into hate, which is the other side of the emotional “coin”!

To comprehend this, consider the horrible high divorce rate in the Western world today.

At this point, it is critical to understand that the Hebrew perspective of love is based in behavior and obedience, not in emotion. The Hebrew verb *ahab* or love is based in the idea of preferring or choosing. This is not an emotional concept. Jesus said, “If you love [*ahab*] Me, [you will] keep my commandments”

and stripped of his clothes by thieves. Two “good religious men,” a Levite and a priest, passed by, doing nothing. The despised Samaritan had compassion and mercy—emotions that emanated from behavior and helping the victim.

If we view things from the middle of the movie by only basing our understanding on our inherited Western thought, the result is that we sever the teaching of the Old Testament from the shortened statements recorded between Jesus and the scribe. When we read the Greek meanings of the word “love” in English, we are two full steps away from the original intent of the Hebrew concept of love, which is preferring and choosing God’s ways.

When I think back to, “You can’t understand the New Testament without understanding the Old,” I think the old professor was right. We must go back to the original Hebrew definitions from the beginning about love to truly understand loving our God and our neighbor. Only then can we place the conversation between Jesus and the scribe in its full historic and cultural context to comprehend what it means to be “not far from the Kingdom of God.” **UN**

# Good Works Moves Forward with Renewed Focus

Continued from page 1

following are just a snapshot of some of those projects. In 2004 a new roof was installed on the church building in Ghana. In the same year a number of scholarships were provided for members in the Philippines as well as grain relief after a major crop failure in Kenya. Mosquito nets and malaria treatments were also provided. In 2006 famine relief was provided for our members in Malawi; construction of church halls took place in Rwanda, Cameroon and Zambia. In 2007 a dental project was funded in Rwanda, a well was dug in Kenya, disaster relief was provided in Chile, El Salvador and the Philippines, and land was purchased in Zambia for a church hall and Feast location. In 2008 funds provided relief for a famine in Kenya, a church hall was funded in Togo and emergency funds were distributed in Mexico and the Philippines. And more recently donated Bibles were distributed

in the Philippines, Zambia and Malawi, and a bus was purchased for the brethren in Zambia.

These have been worthwhile projects that have served our members well, and we will continue, through the generosity of our brethren, to provide for similar projects, particularly emergency relief. As we refocus our efforts we recognize an element that must be present; the element of service. We hope for Good Works to focus on service projects, we hope that Good Works will be brethren helping brethren.

As stated in this month’s issue of *The Good News* we also partnered with LifeNets, an organization supported by many in the United Church of God to work together with Good Works to help our young people with scholarships. Through LifeNets we have been able to leverage resources for projects that help entire communities with clinics, orphanages and fresh water.

As we renew our efforts to aid our brethren facing difficult situations around the world we hope to fulfill our commission from Galatians 6:10: “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” **UN**



The bus purchased by Good Works for brethren in Zambia to use.

# Forward: Factual Foresight or Fictitious Hindsight?

Continued from page 3

Many people were led away in the first century. “I wrote unto the church, but Diotrefes, who loved to have the pre-eminence among them, receives us not” (3 John 9). The man must have had some pretty convincing words to take over a church and turn away an apostle appointed by Jesus.

How many people have gone down the road to division by people who have smitten them with “facts” designed to create an emotional response? Often it is given “on good authority” while refusing to state who the “authority” was. These anonymous facts, perhaps spread with all sincerity by those who believe them, are usually supplied by someone who has a selfish cause to be in charge or to have things done their way. Most often there is the cry of “unfair!”

Years ago a long-time evangelist was called on to cast out a demon. Before cast-

ing it out, he asked, “Why did you rebel against God’s perfect government?” The answer was, “Because God was unfair!”

Is God ever “unfair”? Often God creates situations where things appear, or may even be, “unfair.” This is the only way to find out if we truly have faith in Him to work it out, or will we take matters into our own hands. King Saul made this mistake when Samuel was “late” for the offering, so Saul did it himself (1 Samuel 13:10). Patience is a proof of faith.

Sadly far too many have fallen prey to this trick of Satan. The only way to survive is to not be caught up in emotion. To prove all things and have the patience to see if what you have been told is indeed fact or fiction. Foresight takes faith and time to see if it is fictitious. Hindsight is 20/20, but there is a price. Thankfully there is repentance if you already chose unwisely. **UN**

Continued from Page 1

After Central Park, attendees will subway to Brooklyn for Pizza at a famed NYC pizza hangout, and then experience the stunning evening Lower Manhattan skyline light up in a sunset stroll across the Brooklyn Bridge. Then they'll go back to Wallace Hall by subway for a night of food, drinks and boogie dancing at Wallace Hall, then Times Square at midnight. Sunday's activities start with a tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, followed by a late lunch. They will reconvene at the first Capitol of the United States at Wall Street and take a walk by the new Liberty Tower, to be finished in 2013 at 1776 feet high. Then it's off to Ground Zero to cap off this exciting and spiritually uplifting and invigorating weekend. Come and meet, hang out and start friendships with young adults from all over the world in the Church of God community.

The New York City Young Adults Weekend registration fee of \$100 will cover hall rentals, picnic food and drink at Central Park, the food and drinks at the dance, and two days of city-wide Subway tickets.

For complete details including accommodations, please call or write to NYC Young Adult Weekend registrar Ariel D'Amelio at (206) 753-7762 or e-mail arielitalia@gmail.com. And visit the exciting online description of the NYC Young Adults Weekend at [www.nyccogyoungadults.org](http://www.nyccogyoungadults.org).

Howard Davis

## Days of Unleavened Bread U.S. Holy Day Attendance and Offerings Reported

The totals for the attendance and offerings for the 2012 Days of Unleavened Bread season have been tabulated and reported by the business office. Those figures are as follows:

### First Day of Unleavened Bread

Attendance: 8,661  
Offering: \$569,780.43 \*

(\* Once all offerings are processed, which were individually mailed to the home office by those who did not attend a service, the actual amount should reach approximately \$585,000.)

### Last Day of Unleavened Bread

Attendance: 7,638  
Offering: \$555,503.48 \*\*

(\*\* Once all offerings are processed, which were individually mailed to the

home office by those who did not attend a service, the actual amount should reach approximately \$575,000.)

Gerald Seelig

## Chattanooga Plans 2012 Ocoee Rafting Trip

The Chattanooga, Tennessee, congregation will be hosting the annual Ocoee white water rafting trip on Sunday, Aug. 5, 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, Tennessee, for \$28 per person by July 15 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. For liabilities waivers or if you have any questions, please contact Allen Dance by e-mail at [allendance@hotmail.com](mailto:allendance@hotmail.com) or phone at (423) 855-0868.

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

## Seventh Annual O.C. Bash Planned for July 12-15

Attention young adults and teens between the ages of 15 and 28: The

young adults and teens of the United Church of God in Garden Grove, California, would like to invite you to the seventh annual O.C. Bash on the weekend of July 12-15, 2012. We will once again enjoy fun in the sun and fellowship with each other on the beautiful coast of Southern California. In past years we have had a great time at our beach activities and have had a spiritually fulfilling time with people of like mind. Being

around this beautiful paradise with God's people will really give you a look into the future Kingdom of God. We are looking forward to meeting all of you who strive to follow God's way of life and can attend this event in Orange County, California. Please visit [www.ocbash.com](http://www.ocbash.com) for all the details, comments, registration information and pictures regarding this fellowship weekend.

Aaron Weis



Photo: photos.com

The Brooklyn Bridge at dusk. A walk across Brooklyn Bridge at sunset will be part of the NYC Young Adults weekend in June.



Lacey Hilgen, Daryn Campbell and Megan Brown at the O.C. Bash 2011.



Photo: Kevin Kizer, busylivinglife.blogspot.com

Rapids on the Ocoee River.

# The News in Photos: Melvin Rhodes' Trip to Southern Africa

In a recent letter to the members, Council of Elders chairman Melvin Rhodes recounted his trip to Southern Africa, where he met with brethren and ministers. To read the entire letter, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/ucg-rhodes-letter>.



HARARE, ZIMBABWE CHURCH—This group picture was taken after the service in Harare on the First Day of Unleavened Bread. Almost all the Zimbabwe members got together for Passover, the Night to be Much Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread.

## **Excerpts from the letter**

I've just returned from a very positive and uplifting trip to Zimbabwe and South Africa. It was really good to be with the members down there.

I spent Passover, the Night to be Much Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread with the brethren in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe.

Members in Zimbabwe are scattered all over the country—a nation that is over three times the size of the state of Michigan—where I live—so it's always a joy when everybody can get together for a couple of days. It costs us about \$1,000 to bring them all into a central location. It would cost far more for me to travel around and visit everybody. They also benefit from being with each other.

In a country that not so long ago suffered from severe food shortages, the ladies put on a really nice meal for us on the Night to be Much Observed. Thanks to the generosity of a teen in Lansing, Michigan, I was able to give every single household a box of scripture cards prepared as a fundraiser by our Ambassador Bible Center.

After returning to Johannesburg, the three ministers serving in the region were able to get together Sunday morning to discuss future plans for serving the area. At the present time, there is just one elder resident in South Africa, Roy Demont, who was ordained last year exactly one week after his wife Jean died. Roy is in his seventies and has been speaking in all four congregations in South Africa, once a month in each. The churches are so far apart that three require flights to get there. While we were talking he offered to go to Zimbabwe a couple of times a year, which will help me out greatly, as I can only make it there twice a year from the United States.

Roy's son in law, Grant Chick, was also present. Grant lives in Australia and, with the support of the Australian National Council, was able to help out in South Africa during the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. He and his wife will be returning to the area for the Feast of Tabernacles, where Grant will speak in both Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Also present at the meeting was Jason Webster, who has been doing an outstanding job taking care of the church's needs in the Johannesburg and Pretoria area.



MINISTERIAL MEETING IN SOUTH AFRICA—The three elders serving South Africa are (from right) Roy Demont (resident in South Africa), Melvin Rhodes (senior pastor), Grant Chick (serving in the Brisbane, Australia area). Mr Chick is the son in law of Roy Demont and used to live in South Africa with his wife Kim and their children. He helps out in southern Africa on an occasional basis with the support of the Australian National Council. Also present was Jason Webster (far left) who serves in the Johannesburg/Pretoria area.

All four men took a rare opportunity to meet in Pretoria on Sunday April 15 and discuss how best to serve the southern Africa region. This photo was taken after the meeting when all except Jason were headed to the airport for flights home.



# What's New In MEDIA?

## ■ Beyond Today Airing Schedule

Title	Host	Airing Period
<i>Living in Modern Babylon</i>	Darris McNeely	May 6-12
<i>You Are What You Eat</i>	Steve Myers	May 13-19
<i>Marriage: Soon Obsolete?</i>	Gary Petty	May 20-26
<i>Calling Evil Good</i>	Steve Myers	May 27-June 2

## ■ UCG Web Presence Expands

On May 1, Internet manager Aaron Booth reported the following stats for UCG Web activity:

- 42,790** total Facebook fans.
- 26,393** total Twitter followers.
- 842** videos posted on YouTube.
- 2,015,681** video views on YouTube.
- 208** Bible FAQs posted.
- 416,202** Bible FAQs views.
- 554** e-mail campaigns (*This Is the Way*, UCG Weekly Update, *GN* Newsletter, *WNP* E-news) sent.
- 737,539** clicks to our websites generated by e-mail campaigns.
- 170,000** booklet downloads from Apple's iBook Store.
- 27,587** booklet downloads from Amazon's Kindle Store.

## Featured Links

### ■ Good Works Website

<http://goodworks.ucg.org> Check the status of ongoing projects, read descriptions of the aid being raised, see completed projects, read about featured projects and more. See the front page article for info on how Good Works is moving forward with renewed focus.

### ■ Realtime United Blog

<http://realtimeunited.wordpress.com>

Get important, late-breaking & up-to-date information from senior management personnel at the United Church of God, an International Association.



# UNITED NEWS

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## Periodicals Postage Paid

at Milford, Ohio, and at additional mailing offices

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 6-7:** General Conference of Elders
- May 18-20:** Atlanta Women's Weekend
- May 20:** Ambassador Bible Center Graduation
- May 27:** Pentecost
- June 4-8:** ABC Continuing Education, Cincinnati
- June 17-24:** Camp Cotubic, Ohio
- June 17-20:** Southwest Preteen Camp, California
- June 24-27:** Preteen Camp Colorado
- June 29-July 6:** Camp Pinecrest, Missouri
- July 1-8:** Camp Hye Sierra, California
- July 1-8:** Camp Woodmen, Alabama
- July 8-11:** Preteen Camp Kiwanis, Pennsylvania
- July 22-25:** Preteen Camp Ironwood, Minnesota
- July 22-29:** Northwest Camp, Oregon

## ATTENTION GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AND PARENTS, SEND US YOUR BIOS!

**Congratulations!** We would like to feature the 2012 high school graduates in the July *United News*. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions and send a photograph by **June 10, 2012**.

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

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

By e-mail to: [Mitch\\_Moss@ucg.org](mailto: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

### Vertical Thought Print Runs

