



United Church of God
P.O. Box 541027,
Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027
(513) 576-9796

United News™

News of the United Church of God, an International Association

Vol. 15, No. 4

www.ucg.org

May 2009

News At a Glance

Holy Day Offering Figures Show Increase

The preliminary figure for the U.S. offering amount on the First Day of Unleavened Bread rose 1.3 percent over 2008 to \$825,531.37—despite a 1.6 decrease in attendance. Once all offerings individually mailed to the home office are processed, this figure should reach \$845,000.

The Holy Day offering amount for the Last Day of Unleavened Bread was \$797,706.67. This represents a 0.7 percent increase over the previous year. Attendance also rose 0.7 percent over 2008. After all offerings are processed, the actual amount should reach \$810,000.

Gerald Seelig

New Facility Secured for Northwest Camp

A new camp facility in the Northwest has been located and secured for the same dates originally planned for Davidson.

The dates for the Northwest Camp remain Aug. 2-9, with staff arriving Aug. 1. The new location is Canby Grove Christian Camp and Conference Center near Canby, Oregon, which is conveniently located half an hour south of Portland.

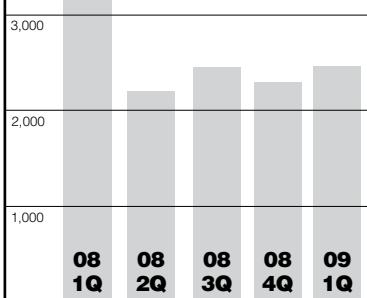
Activities will include waterskiing, kayaking, basketball, volleyball, archery, arts and crafts, dance class, camp dances, campfire, tubing, speedaway, golf, low challenge course and swimming. Please refer to page 20 (the Oregon camp page) of the recently mailed *United Youth Camps Magazine* for further information.

Ken Treybig

See "News at a Glance," page 2

United Statistics

Beyond Today Responses via phone or Web site per quarter



Biblical Tour Goes Up to Jerusalem



ISRAEL EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS sit on the steps of the Temple Mount. See "Israel" page 9.

Editorial Conference Focuses on Increasing Impact of Gospel Message

by Larry Salyer

Almost 40 writers, editors and additional media employees and volunteer staff came to the home office the week of March 16 for the annual Editorial Conference. In addition, a few wives were able to be present as well. This group represents the talented and skilled servants who produce a wide array of communications both to the world and to the Church.

The conference was held in stages over four days. On Monday, managing editors met in the conference room for a full day of discussions. Web and video editors were present, as well as print editors. This was a good opportunity to exchange ideas around the table as well as for the administration to present some principles of proclamation that we need to follow across all publications and media products. The editors were able to share the progress and challenges of their respective publications.

"It was helpful to review this information, to learn what others are doing in their various media areas and to exchange ideas. It's always encouraging to spend time with others who are so generous in willingly giving of their time to help with our media efforts," said *Good News* managing editor Scott Ashley.

Tuesday and Wednesday had the full complement of attendees present for sessions that became quite interactive on several occasions. During brainstorming sessions, we discussed ways to increase the impact of our printed material, how to better connect people to the gospel in meaningful ways and relevant topics that our writers could tackle in future articles.

"As one of the newer members of the general editorial team, I have found these meetings to be extremely beneficial," reflected Dan Dowd, who writes for various UCG publications.

"Not only do I get to learn many tricks of the trade from men and women who have been about the process of writing for the Church's publications for decades, but I also have the opportunity to contribute in an environment of encouragement and participation.



John LaBissoniere and Steve Myers (photos by Elizabeth Cannon)

"I get to be part of the conversations of men who have been in the ministry for most of their adult lives, and I get to hear their thoughts on the craft of writing and to bounce some of my thoughts and ideas off of them."

Attendees listened to seminars ranging from "Reaching Readers' Hearts" and "Reaching Young Adults" to "Highlighting the Uniqueness of the True Gospel Message" and "Emphasizing the Life-Changing Benefits of God's Way."

Contributing writer and editor Tom Robinson commented, "We had some

See "Editorial," page 6

Web Marketing Making Strides

by Peter Eddington

The UCG Strategic Plan calls for us to increase the number of first-time Web visitors and continue to develop our Web marketing plan to attract first-time Web visitors. One major factor in achieving these objectives is search engine marketing (SEM).

Results so far this fiscal year are encouraging. Subscription results (new subscribers) from SEM jumped 14 percent for the calendar year 2008 compared to the calendar year 2007. For the second quarter (Q2) of fiscal year 2008 we saw a 37 percent increase in subscription results compared to Q2 of 2007 (37,011 compared to 27,063).

The Church's online marketing is helping greatly to increase our first-time Web visitors. For Q2 2008 compared to Q1 2008, we saw a 23 percent increase in subscription results (37,011 compared to 29,997)! These efforts go into many nations around the world, not just the United States. Our SEM budget is assisting our gospel efforts around the globe.

Our Web marketing plan now includes display advertising—in addition to the more traditional keyword search advertising and video clips. The addition of display marketing has improved our keyword search numbers very nicely. In addition, our average cost per response (CPR) went from \$3.61 in December 2007 down to \$3.11 in December 2008. January 2009 gave us an even better \$2.87 CPR on 14,283 responses.

Please continue to pray for the success of our online proclamation efforts. **UN**

Peter Eddington is media and communications production manager.

Inside:

- 2 Profile: Tom and Heather Disher Forward! Hinge Point of History
- 3 Around the World: Nigeria, Portugal, Germany, Estonia, Philippines and more
- 4 United Youth Corps Jordan Update
- 5 UYC Directors Attend Workshop; Chile Preteen Camp; Durban Camp
- 7 Seminar Reports
- 8 Minister Visits Brethren in Africa
- 9 Israel Educational Program
- 10 Treasure Digest: Courage to Change the World, Spend Time in Nature; Turning the Hearts; Children's Corner; more
- 12 From the Word: Proverbs: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Times; more
- 15 Local Church Updates
- 17 Announcements
- 20 What's New on the Web?

News At a Glance

Continued from page 1

Elder Hired to Full-Time Ministry

Bill Johnson was recently hired into the full-time U.S. ministry. Mr. Johnson and his wife, Dawn, are currently living and serving in the North Carolina area where Ron Kelley is the pastor.

The Johnsons will work with Mr. Kelley until they are able to sell their home and relocate. We hope this can take place sometime this summer. In the meantime, Mr. Johnson will serve as the assistant pastor for the Greensboro, Hickory and Asheville congregations while also helping out in nearby church areas.

Jim Franks

New Elders Ordained

On Jan. 17, Andy Buchholz was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Donna, serve in the Elmira, New York, congregation.

Three more elders were ordained in April. On April 4, Homer Moore was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Anna, serve in the Garden Grove, California, congregation.

On April 9, Barry Korthuis was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Cassandra, serve in the Tampa, Florida, congregation.

On April 11, Mike Iiams was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Joyce, serve in the Spokane, Washington/Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, congregation.

Feast Sites in Peru, Kenya, Jamaica and Iloilo City Confirmed

The Feast of Tabernacles in Peru will again take place in Huanchaco, Peru. For more information, e-mail the Feast coordinator, Manuel Quijano, at manuel_quijano@ucg.org.

The Feast in Kenya will take place at Lake Naivasha—about two hours from the capital city of Nairobi.

Jamaica has confirmed a Feast site in Ocho Rios. Go to the Caribbean Web page (www.ucgcaribbean.org) for information and to download a hotel reservation form.

There will also be a Feast site in Iloilo City, Philippines at the Punta Villa Resort, located in the Visayas Islands in the central part of the Philippines. It is about 283 miles south of Manila.

The 2009 Festival Planning Brochure includes detailed descriptions of the sites in Kenya, Jamaica and Iloilo City as well as housing information.

See "News at a Glance," page 20

Profile: Tom and Heather Disher

The home office welcomed Tom Disher, the newest addition to the team, in March. Tom works with Internet managing editor Aaron Booth in Web development. His duties focus on Web design and managing UCG's internal Web sites.

Before moving to Ohio, Tom and his wife, Heather, attended the Meadville, Pennsylvania, congregation where Tom helped with the sound system and computer recordings of sermons. Heather helped plan church events such as the Night to Be Much Observed dinner, an unleavened dessert party and a ski weekend. They also served as deejays at the Pittsburgh Prom for a few years. "We still make it back to help out with prom work parties whenever we can!" said Heather.

Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and western Maryland respectively, Tom and Heather found that attending school so far away from friends and family proved to be trying at times. "Without the Meadville members we would have been really lost. It was still difficult, though, as the members are spread few and far between. It is very easy to feel isolated."

Heather graduated from Mercyhurst College in 2007 with a degree in art therapy and human development and family relations. Before moving to Cincinnati, she worked with disadvantaged youth in school and residential settings. She appreciates that she has the opportunity to make a positive difference in people's lives through her work. Now that she is in Cincinnati, she is settled in and looking for work!



Tom graduated from Penn State Behrend also in 2007 with a degree in management information systems and will graduate in May with his MBA. Previous to his current position at the home office, he has worked for himself, for General Electric (GE) and for a nonprofit organization through Penn State University. He loves creating Web sites and considers it a unique way to blend creativity and technical skills. He is very excited to be able to serve God's people with his work.

When he's not working on Web sites for the Church, Tom enjoys building and modifying computers, cars and "anything with a cord or button." He also enjoys camping and the outdoors. His latest project of installing a computer system in his Jeep has been put on hold, but he looks forward to finishing it soon.

Heather, on the other hand, loves to cook and make her own recipes. She also enjoys reading, painting, sculpting and sewing and hopes to make more time for these soon.

They both love to travel, learn new things and play with their dog, Pixel.

Tom has now completed his second month working at the home office. "We have been very encouraged by the excitement and passion for the work in the home office. We hope that members around the

world, even those who feel alone in their day-to-day activities of life, will know how much they are cared for and thought of by all the members working here. We hope that everyone can find a way to feel connected to the work and know that they are a part of God's plan, wherever they are and whatever they are doing! There is always a way to serve and use your gifts." UN

FORWARD! Hinge Point of History

by Jim Franks



The world is in trouble! We are facing economic realities that were not envisioned even two years ago. Terrorists are alive and well, pirates are attacking ships on the high seas, and nations are threatening war. When describing conditions in the Middle East, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu used the term "hinge of history." He was referring to the serious challenge facing Israel with the potential for an Iran with nuclear weapons.

In his March 31 article in *The Atlantic* magazine, Jeffrey Goldberg wrote: "[Netanyahu] said the Iranian nuclear challenge represents a 'hinge of history' and added that 'Western civilization' will have failed if Iran is allowed to develop nuclear weapons." Hinge points can be defined as crucial moments in world history when a change in direction is about to take place—generally for the worse. No doubt we are living in just such a time.

Watching the news on a daily basis can cause you to become discouraged and fail to see the real hope for the future. The apostle Paul wrote some comforting words in Romans 8:28, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (New American Standard Bible).

World conditions have caused increased depression, suicide and anxiety among the masses. In Daniel 7:25 we read that in the end time the prophesied little horn will "wear out the saints" (King James Version). According to Brown-Driver-Briggs, this is translated from a Chaldean word that means mental affliction. As we get closer to the end of this age, it will be easy to become so engrossed in the horrible conditions of the world that we lose sight of God's promises. The gospel is the good news of the Kingdom of God, but it can be drowned out by all the bad news that surrounds us.

The world is currently facing a time that has never been seen—truly a hinge point of history, a moment of truth. But as Paul assures us, God will see us through any crisis we may experience in this lifetime. As the name of this column states, we must continue marching forward with confidence, knowing that God is the One in charge.

We can't let the bad news, the threats of war, the violence and unstable governments discourage us from our goal. We must see the good news of the Kingdom no matter how much bad news surrounds us. We must always go forward! UN

Jim Franks is the Ministerial Services operation manager.

May 2009
Vol. 15, No. 4



United News
News of the United Church of God, an International Association

United News (ISSN 1088-8020) is published monthly except April and October by the United Church of God, an International Association, 555 Technecenter Drive, Milford, OH 45150. © 2009 United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Periodicals Postage paid at Milford, Ohio 45150, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post publications mail agreement number 1487167.

UCG/IA Council of Elders: Robert Berendt, Aaron Dean, Robert Dick (chairman), Bill Eddington, Roy Holladay, Paul Kieffer, Clyde Kilough, Victor Kubik, Darris McNeely, Richard Pinelli, Richard Thompson, Robin Webber

President: Clyde Kilough Media and Communications Services operation manager: Larry Salyer

Address changes: POSTMASTER—Send address changes to *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027

International addresses:

AFRICA & ASIA (except as listed below): United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: info@ucg.org

AUSTRALIA: United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia. Phone: 0755 202-111 Fax: 0755 202-122

BENELUX countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg): P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, The Netherlands.

BRITISH ISLES: United Church of God—British Isles, P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts. WD19 6FZ England. Phone: 020 8386 8467 Fax: 020 8386 1999

CANADA: United Church of God—Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada. Phone: (905) 876-9966, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (905) 876-0569 E-mail: info@ucg.ca

CARIBBEAN: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027,

Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: info@ucg.org

EAST AFRICA (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda): United Church of God—East Africa, P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200 Kenya. E-mail: kenya@ucg.org

FUJI: United Church of God, P.O. Box 11081, Laucala Beach Estate, Suva, Fiji.

FRENCH-SPEAKING AREAS: Église de Dieu Unie—France, 127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France.

GERMANY: Vereinte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany. Phone: 0228-9454636 Fax: 0228-9454637 E-mail: info@gutenachrichten.org

ITALY: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita, Casella Postale 187, 24121 Bergamo Centro, Italy. Phone/Fax: (+39) 035 4523573. E-mail: info@labuonanotizia.org

MALAWI: P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi. Phone: 085 22717. E-mail: malawi@ucg.org

MAURITIUS: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius. E-mail: mauritiuss@ucg.org

NEW ZEALAND: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Shortland St., Auckland 1140, New Zealand. Phone: 0508-463-763

NIGERIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 2265, Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria. Phone: 01-8113644. E-mail: nigeria@ucg.org

PHILIPPINES: United Church of God, P.O. Box 81840, DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines. Phone: (+63) 82 224-4444 Cell/Text: (+63) 918-904-4444

SCANDINAVIA: Guds Enade Kyrka, P.O. Box 3535. 111 74, Stockholm, Sweden. E-mail: sverige@ucg.org

SOUTH AFRICA (and Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland only): United Church of God, Southern Africa, P.O. Box 2209, Beacon Bay, East London 5205, South Africa. Phone/Fax: 043 748-1694.

SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS: Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Phone: (513) 576-9796

TONGA: United Church of God—Tonga, P.O. Box 2617, Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

ZAMBIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia. Phone: (02) 226076. E-mail: zambia@ucg.org

ZIMBABWE: United Church of God, Zimbabwe, P.O. Box 928, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe. Phone: 011716273 E-mail: zimbabwe@ucg.org

Internet access on your computer:

The United Church of God, an International Association, has a home page on the Internet's World Wide Web. The address <http://www.ucg.org> gives you access to general information and news about the Church, issues of *The Good News* and *United News*, as well as our booklets. The address <http://www.ucg.ca> accesses the Church's Canadian Web site, <http://www.ucg.org.au> the Australian Web site, <http://www.labuonanotizia.org> the Italian Web site, <http://www.goodnews.org.uk> the British Isles Web site, <http://www.ucg.org.ph> the Philippines Web site, <http://www.ucgastafrica.org> the Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda site and <http://www.ucg-rsa.org> the Southern Africa Web site.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Church of God is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples.

Editor: Peter W. Eddington Managing editor: Mike Bennett Associate editor: Elizabeth Cannon Copy editor: Becky Bennett

Doctrinal reviewers: Roy Demarest, Bill Jahns, Arthur Suckling, Chuck Zimmerman

Scriptural references are from the New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

Subscriptions: *United News* is sent automatically to members of the United Church of God and is free to all who request it. Your subscription is provided by the generous, voluntary contributions of members of the United Church of God, an International Association, and their coworkers. Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax-deductible. To request a subscription, write to *United News*, United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, or to one of the international addresses below.



News From Around the World

Scattered Members in Nigeria Committed to the Faith

by Mark Michelson

In February Oludare “Dare” Akinbo (our elder in Nigeria), Steve Allwine (a member from the United States), Paul Ogundipe and I traveled 2,000 miles back and forth across Nigeria to visit our congregations, scattered members and *GN* readers. It was a rewarding and fruitful trip.

We have congregations in Lagos, Benin City and Owerri, and most of our members live where they are able to attend one of them. There are others, though, who only have personal contact with other members at the Feast of Tabernacles. Those were the ones we especially wanted to visit. We wanted to encourage and remind them that they are not alone.

Some of the scattered members date back to attendance in Worldwide Church of God and have been cut off for nearly 15 years. In some cases they were the only faithful members left in their area. For some it also took years

to reestablish contact. It is an incredible example that they continued on faithfully even though they were alone.

Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, and a number of members are the only ones in the Church in their city or even their region. Mr. Oke is the only member in Ado-Ekiti. He formerly attended WCG until it split whereupon he was left on his own.

A couple of years ago he was able to become a *Good News* subscriber and came into contact with UCG. He brought out his current copy of the *GN* when we were there, and it was worn from having been repeatedly pored over, word for word.

He now listens to DVD sermons on the Sabbath, and his wife has begun to believe as well.

On our visit to his home his older daughter joined us and asked questions regarding the gospel and salvation through Jesus Christ. She wanted to know why we didn't have a congregation in such a large city as Ado-Ekiti.

Maybe there will be one someday. Mr. Akinbo has committed himself to a series of *GN* Bible studies in major cities throughout Nigeria. It is an ambitious undertaking, but his desire to preach the gospel of the Kingdom to his nation and to reach out to those who have been hurt or cut off is strong. Scattered members of the Body of Christ are holding on to the faith across Nigeria, and we wanted them to know they are not alone.

Jesus Christ said, “Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matthew 25:40).

Each of us received the gospel by God's grace through the efforts of those who came before us. Now it is our turn to carry that message throughout the world to all whom God may choose to call. **UN**

Mark Mickelson is the pastor of Spokane, Washington/Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, congregation and associate senior pastor for Nigeria.

Elder Visits Portugal During Spring Festival Season



Susanna Marques with Jorge de Campos in Madeira

On April 2, Jorge de Campos, an elder working in the international mail processing department who is also responsible for the Portuguese language UCG literature, visited scattered members in Portugal and the Portuguese islands.

Many of the people visited had not had contact with the Church of God since the late 1990s.

Maria Susanna Marques, who lives on the small island of Madeira, is a long-standing member who has had little contact with the Church in the last 14 years due to her physical condition, the mountainous area where she lives and the costs of traveling. This was her first visit by an elder since 1995.

“She just could not stop thanking God that someone had come from so far away just to see her,” remembered Mr. de Campos.

Even though many years have passed without contact with the ministry of God's Church, God has been with them through serious trials and tests, and they have remained faithful to God's ways.

“The brethren in Portugal, as do the scattered brethren in other nations, have serious health conditions and difficult tests due to distances and language, besides the typical Christian trials and tests,” said Mr. de Campos.

Francisco Diniz, who has recently learned about the Church and met with Mr. de Campos at his brother Luciano's home in Ponta Delgada, Azores, has requested that we stop sending him literature in Spanish as he cannot read or understand it at all. This shows how some Portuguese-speaking people battle with Spanish, and it is a further witness to the need of a work in the Portuguese language.

During his journey, Mr. de Campos met with several families including José Martins, a long-standing member, and his family in Porto. José is one of the few laborers that we have in the Portuguese language and has been very helpful in the translation and review of UCG booklets into Portuguese.

Mr. de Campos was also able to observe the Passover with Joaquim Levy and Jaime and Maria José Campos in Lisbon. Together they kept the Holy Day in their regular hall in downtown Lisbon.

On the following Sabbath in Lisbon, Mr. de Campos conducted a *Good News* Bible lecture with the theme “What Is God Doing on Earth?” This positive, good news-based approach focused on showing how mankind has made the wrong decisions and how

Jesus Christ is coming to save mankind by establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

An invitation in Portuguese to the 266 English-language *GN* subscribers had been sent prior to the trip, and four replied. Due to various reasons, three of the four respondents were unable to attend. The fourth was a young Brazilian student, who had many questions after the Bible study and showed genuine understanding of a number of scriptures. The total attendance at the study was nine people. “I believe that this *GN* Bible study was successful, and it is something we need to continue doing,” commented Mr. de Campos.

“Please continue to pray that God may give our scattered brethren in the whole world—not just those in Portugal, but all scattered brethren of all races and languages—comfort, help and encouragement through these difficult times. There is a strong need for loving guidance, instruction and unity.

“Please also pray for more laborers, as the harvest is great,” Mr. de Campos said. **UN**

To read more about Jorge de Campos's trip to Portugal, read his blog at www.travelpod.com/travel-blog/jorgedecampos/1/tpod.html.



Brethren in Lisbon: Maria José and Jaime Campos (deacon), David Campos, Fernanda Pacheco, Sara Campos, Maria José de Campos, Ana Paula Almeida and Joaquim Levy

International News At a Glance

UCG-Germany Reaches Circulation Goal

The Vereinte Kirche Gottes (UCG-Germany) has already reached its 2009 circulation goal of 6,000 subscribers to the *Gute Nachrichten* (*Good News*) magazine. A year-end total of 7,000 subscribers is now a realistic possibility.

Paul Kieffer

Minister Reports Successful Trip to Northern Ireland

A recent four-day preaching and pastoral trip to Northern Ireland took place Feb. 6 to 9.

We had a very successful Sabbath meeting at the Adair Arms Hotel in Ballymena, where services are normally held, with 12 present, including a new couple from Larne.

We are now considering future plans that would hopefully double the number of Sabbath meetings in Northern Ireland. The new Comfort Hotel in Antrim is nearer to Belfast and potentially would be a better location for several members.

After keeping a very profitable baptism counseling appointment on Sunday in Coleraine, I returned to the Adair Arms Hotel to find that a new prospective had been there to attend services—but on the wrong day!

We later arranged to meet at his home in Portstewart on Monday morning. He said that he has been on the *Good News* database for about three years and agrees with much of the magazine's content.

Please continue to pray for the members and prospective members in Northern Ireland.

John Ross Schroeder

GN Ad Produces 760 Responses in Philippines

On Feb. 26, UCG-Philippines ran its first ever newspaper ad in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, the most widely read broadsheet newspaper in the country. Within a few hours, responses began pouring in.

Rather than include our mailing address in the ad, respondents were directed to contact us by either cell phone text (SMS) messaging, which is very popular in the Philippines, or

via the Web. This enables us to track the exact number of responses more accurately.

We created a fully automated system that automatically fires a pre-designed text message to each person within seconds of receiving the request. We also created a new Web site, www.gnmagazine.org.ph, to accommodate Web requests or more inquiries about the Church or the magazine.

We believe we have gotten higher quality respondents to this ad. We are in the process of printing a few thousand copies of this ad to post on bulletin boards and other public forums.

Thank you for your prayers for the ad.

United News Asia

Estonia Feast Site Reaches Capacity

Never has there been such an interest in the Feast site in Estonia. Definite commitments now number almost 90, which is capacity. The high number for the Fall Festival had previously been about 65 in 2005.

Read a description of the Feast site at www.kubik.org/estonia where attendees can find updated information about the site.

Victor Kubik

First UCG Elder Ordained in Argentina

On April 4, 2009, Alfredo Arboleas was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Alejandra, serve in the Bahia Blanca, Argentina, congregation. He is the first elder in Argentina to be ordained in UCG.

Portuguese Work Growing in Intensity

We are pleased to announce that booklets in Portuguese are now available at the Portuguese *Good News* Web site, www.revistaboanova.org. *The Gospel of the Kingdom of God* booklet is our most recently completed booklet.

We are excited that God is increasing the intensity of the work in the Portuguese language and appreciate your continued prayers for the growth in this area of God's work.

Our focus at this stage is to get a solid base of booklets in Portuguese so that those whom God calls may have access to the basic key doctrines.

We thank you for your continued prayers for the health and protection of the existing laborers and that God may continue to provide workers in this language.

Jorge de Campos

United Youth Corps in Jordan: *Living in Another Language*

by Zach Smith

"Saba el khair! Keef haluk?" This is the typical greeting we receive in the morning—"Good morning! How are you?"—when we arrive to school or when we see students for the first time on the bus.

We have become familiar with these and similar phrases, but even after living in Jordan for over seven months, the majority of what is being said around us falls on deaf ears. After a while we have had to learn how to block out all the background noise of people talking, since we don't know what they're saying anyway. We are truly living in another language.

Thinking about how unaware we are of the majority of what is being said around us made me think about a spiritual parallel with the world.

In Jordan we hear Arabic all the time. We see it on the signs around us, and we hear it in the call to prayer that sounds five times a day. Ninety-five percent of it we just don't understand. It's not because of inferior intelligence; we just don't understand.

Although the world might be tuning out the words of God's truth at this time, one day our actions will ring clear in their minds when they call to remembrance this "foreign culture" that was being lived among them.

Likewise, the entire world is living in another language, and they don't even know it. They hear messages about the Bible, Jesus Christ, God the Father and a number of other religious things.

They recognize these often-used names and phrases in the Bible, like

we recognize everyday words in Arabic. But beyond that, they don't understand much about the truth of God. It is as though God's way of life is a foreign language to mankind.

At this time, the world cannot understand God's way of life because

truth, we cannot know it. It is as foreign to us as the Arabic alphabet is to the average American.

Nonverbal Language

The Jordanian people also use some unique nonverbal language in

act, the things we do, our attitudes and how we interact with others can send a strong nonverbal message.

Our lives can say, "There is something different about me." We are to have our conduct honorable among the gentiles (the world) so that they will notice that something is different (1 Peter 2:11-12). Although the world might be tuning out the words of God's truth at this time, one day our actions will ring clear in their minds when they call to remembrance this "foreign culture" that was



Lunch in Petra with the newest member of our group, Sami the donkey



God's truth at this time, one day our actions will ring clear in their minds when they call to remembrance this "foreign culture" that was being lived among them.

The crew with a few local Bedouin children in Petra

the form of gestures. For instance, a smooth caressing of one's chin as if to stroke one's beard is a gesture for "please," and holding one's hand with fingers squeezed together pointing to the ceiling is the sign for "wait."

Some nonverbal language, however, is universal—a smile. A smile just seems to say it all. For us in Jordan, a smile seems to say, "You are welcome," "We're glad you're here"—even "I don't know what you are saying."

Although at this time most of the world does not understand our language (the gospel of the Kingdom of God), our nonverbal language as Christians can say a lot. The way we

being lived among them.

Even though the gift of tongues sometimes seems like it would be helpful when living in an Arab country, we are not too upset about lacking this talent right now.

We are just thankful that God has allowed us to understand His truth, which is a foreign language to the world around us. In Jordan we are living in another spoken language; but all around the world, God's people are living in a language that is naturally foreign to mankind—a language of truth and peace. **UN**

Keep up with the Jordan crew's experiences at ucjordan08.blogspot.com.

Minister Visits Jordan Crew, Reports Successful Project

by Dave Register

When we dispatched our five volunteers to Jordan, we promised to visit them during the year. They are isolated in a Muslim country with the closest members several thousand miles away. The volunteers were able to attend the Feast of Tabernacles in Sri Lanka and visited with United Youth Corps coordinator Doug Horchak and his wife, Tanya, during the Feast.

Earlier this month I visited our volunteers in Jordan, Lewis and Lena VanAusdle, Tine Banda and Zach and Emily Smith. I am pleased to report they are all doing an excellent job of representing the Church in the various projects where they serve in Jordan. These volunteers are ambassadors for God's way of life for the Jordanian students and projects where they work and serve. They are not salaried, but their housing and living expenses are provided by the schools, center or the Church.

While in Jordan, I accompanied the volunteers to their various jobs,

including riding the bus with them and sitting in on their classes or projects.

Lena and Emily serve at the Young Muslim Women's Association Centre for the Mentally and Emotionally Disabled. They teach disabled students in the vocational area of the school, which includes ceramics and weaving. The products the students create are sold to help fund the school. The school has about 100 students and is a charity sponsored by Princess Sarvath al Hassan of Jordan.

Lewis and Zach are assistant instructors at the Amman Baccalaureate School. Lewis helps teach in the industrial arts area and Zach assists in the physical education department. Again, Princess Sarvath al Hassan is a patron of the preparatory school, and she requested our volunteers serve at the school because of their examples of good character and behavior.

Tine Banda serves as a fellow at the Regional Human Security Centre. The center is a special project of Prince Hassan with the goal of

bringing peace to the region of the Middle East through mutual understanding. The center does research and publishes papers on Middle East human rights or security issues. Tine's training and background in international law has equipped her well for her responsibilities at the center.

Prince Hassan and his wife, Princess Sarvath, and all the school directors expressed deep appreciation for our volunteers and requested that we send volunteers for these projects next year.

All of our volunteers were offered full-time employment at the end of their service time. I believe this is



Dave Register and Jordan crew enjoying a traditional Jordanian meal

one of the highest forms of approval for our volunteers' level of service and commitment to the Youth Corps programs in Jordan.

The volunteers will return home in July. If you are interested in serving in one of the Jordan Youth

Corps projects, please contact Doug Horchak at doug_horchack@ucg.org or go to www.ucgyouthcorps.org and download the fact sheet and application. **UN**

Dave Register is the director of Education Programs.

Camp Directors Upgrade Training With ACA

by Doug Johnson

Three United Youth Camp directors recently completed the American Camp Association's "Basic Camp Director's Course" professional development supplement. Gary Black (director of the UYC Winter Camp), Andy Burnett (Camp Carter director) and Doug Johnson (Camp Heritage director) attended the session March 22-26 at Camp Henry Horner, a Jewish Council Youth Services camp north of Chicago.

"Think of it as 'continuing education' for our directors," said UYC national coordinator Ken Treybig. "I'm happy we were able to offer this opportunity for further professional development to these men. It helps them better understand the foundation for our established policies and procedures."

The UYC camp directors attended the course along with 28 other camp personnel from various scouting, faith-based and private youth camp operations. Numerous other UYC camp directors took the same course at the beginning of our asso-

ciation with the ACA nearly 10 years ago. Our teen camp program has been accredited by the ACA since 2000.

The course is designed for those who have directed camps for six or fewer years and is designed to help camp personnel professionalize and standardize their training in 13 core areas of camp development and planning.

These areas are leadership, mission and purpose, target population and diversity, participant development and behavior, program design and activities, human resources, risk management, health and wellness, business and finance, marketing, site and facilities, food service, and transportation.

The final challenge of the course, working in small groups of four or five students, was to construct a proposal for establishing and running a new camp operation for one year, with all 13 core areas integrated into the

"Think of it as 'continuing education' for our directors."

planning. These proposals were then presented on the last morning of the training session, just before certifi-

cates of completion were handed out to all those attending.

Since United Youth Camps rent facilities from established camps, and run for just one short session per

year (usually one week), not all areas of study are as directly useful for our program as others. But all three directors came away from the training session with an increased awareness of

the complexity of camp planning and direction, and found the course of great benefit. **UN**

Doug Johnson is the camp director at Camp Heritage.



Gary Black, Doug Johnson and Andy Burnett hone their camp directing skills at ACA workshop

Preteens Dive in to Camp in Chile

by Elizabeth Briones

A total of 40 children and 30 parents enjoyed preteen camp in Chile this year. From Feb. 22-24, children under age 11 had the pleasure to participate in several activities organized by the Church especially for them.

On Sunday, Feb. 22, camp started with a day in the swimming pool at the home of one of the members of the Santiago congregation. The day was sunny and hot, which encouraged the children and several of the parents to use the pool all day long. The rest of the parents fellowshiped and prepared the lunch for everyone.

On Monday morning, activities took place at the hall we normally use for services on the Sabbath. The teenagers of the congregation presented a show about the days just before and during the Passover time as Israel was still in Egypt, including the 10 plagues. Children and parents were absolutely surprised with the detailed preparation and presentation of the show.

Scenery, clothing and presentation was very well rehearsed and presented. We all learned and remembered in a vivid way what Israel had to go through on those important days. Lunch was also served by the teenagers. In the afternoon we took the children to a zoo located in the city of Buin, about 25 miles south of Santiago.

Tuesday was the last day for the short camp. On this day children and parents went to a German camp just outside Santiago. It was an ideal place to finish the camp on a high note. We

all had the chance to enjoy nature in the forest. There is also a small zoo there. The swimming pool area had a green area where the children could play games and the adults could relax. There, we all had the chance to enjoy the *once*—coffee time—one in the late morning and another in late afternoon. Lunch was served for all in the nice restaurant at the facility.

It is important for our children to create good relationships with other children in God's Church through these activities. No doubt the friendships they create in childhood are going to be very important as they grow up.

Parents also have the opportunity to draw closer together when helping children in these kinds of activities, which also help parents teach the way of God to their children. Children do not yet understand the truth as we parents do, but they can see the desire that parents and the Church have for them to enjoy life and serve God at the same time.

We want to thank those people who participated and helped in the organization of this nice activity for the children of God's Church in this part of the world. We parents hope God continues to bless His Church in order to continue to serve all of us with these kinds of activities. **UN**



Preteens enjoy pool time at camp

Durban Campers Learn Team Building

by Nomtobeko Duma

Eight young people were given the opportunity of attending a four-day summer camp Dec. 7 to 10, 2008, at the Mtunzini Twinstreams Environmental Education Centre, 250 kilometers north of Durban, South Africa.

On our arrival at the camp the events started off with icebreaker activities. These activities taught us how to trust one another. In one such exercise, we lifted each team member into the air and held him or her there in a prone position for 10 seconds while rotating him or her around and around. It was nerve-racking at times, as there were seven young people of different shapes and sizes holding the eighth team member aloft. Fortunately not one of us dropped to the ground!

After a short walk in the dark down to the beach, we played a very competitive game of stalk the lantern. Stalk the lantern is a game similar to capture the flag in which one team has to find

a lit lantern in the dark before the other team does. Players who are caught by the other team are out of the game.

The following day the Compass Check was given by Mr. Helfrich, a member from the Durban congregation, on how to set and achieve goals. After a hearty breakfast we set out on a 5-kilometer walk along the beach. At times the sand was excruciatingly hot, but some of the gallant young men passed their sandals to a number of very grateful young ladies. The walk was followed by canoeing on the lake. Fortunately we did not encounter any of the resident crocodiles.

Then our team leader led us into a mangrove swamp where we were encouraged to cover ourselves in mud. It was only after he had told us that it is the same mud used in health spas that we flopped down and enjoyed a mud bath.

Our night activity challenged us to discover animals that lived in the forest surrounding our camp. We discovered bats, owls, bush babies and bush pigs. Each team member had to draw

a bat, a bush baby and an owl, which proved to be a hilarious exercise as none of us were blessed with artistic abilities.

The following morning Mrs. Helfrich gave our Compass Check on how to manage a family budget.

That day a bridge-building activity took up most of the day. It proved to be a strenuous exercise, and we only succeeded in building the bridge across a stream on our second attempt. We were given a length of rope, six empty plastic drums and three poles. We learned to work together as a team, benefiting from each team member's help, encouragement and advice.

We enjoyed eating bush bread made by placing dough onto a stick and holding it over an open fire. Another assignment for that evening was to make an SOS on the beach. The letters had to be three meters long and knee high.

Our last day was spent on a peaceful walk through the forest, and we got to observe and learn about nature and the impact man can have on our heritage. We were encouraged to always have a positive impact on nature.

What a marvelous experience! New lessons were learned and stronger bonds between us forged. **UN**



Durban campers listen to Compass Check in the nature reserve

Ministerial Services Reports End-of-Year Statistics

by Jim Franks

Since last summer (2008), Ministerial Services has seen an increase in the number of new contacts as reported on the monthly church reports. A new contact is an individual who makes "contact" with a local pastor. This may occur by attending services (or a seminar) or by making personal contact with the pastor (by phone, e-mail or letter).



According to the monthly reports, the total number of new contacts for the third quarter of 2008 (July-September) for all U.S. congregations was 398. The total for the fourth quarter (October-December) was 348. This number was lower primarily because pastors were away for the Feast of Tabernacles. The grand total of 746 for the final six months of 2008 amounts to an average of 124 new contacts per month.

For 2009 we currently have statistics for January only. The total for this first month of the year spiked to 190 compared to the average of 124.

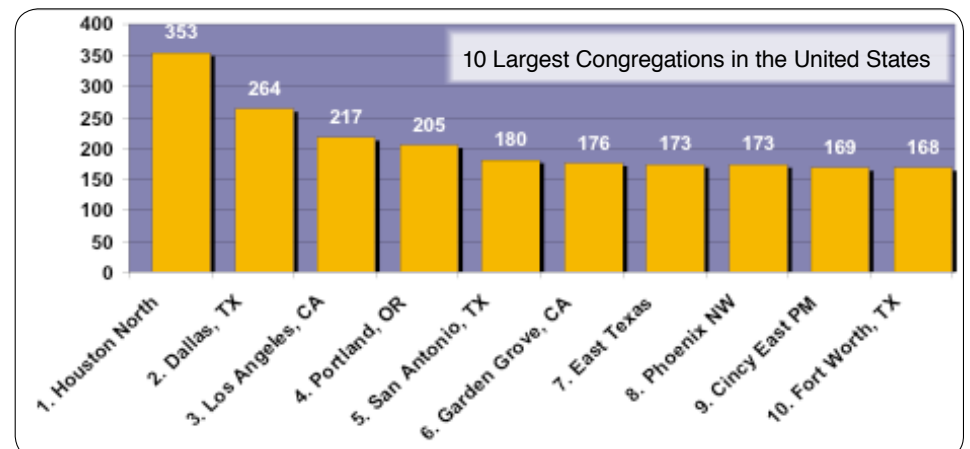
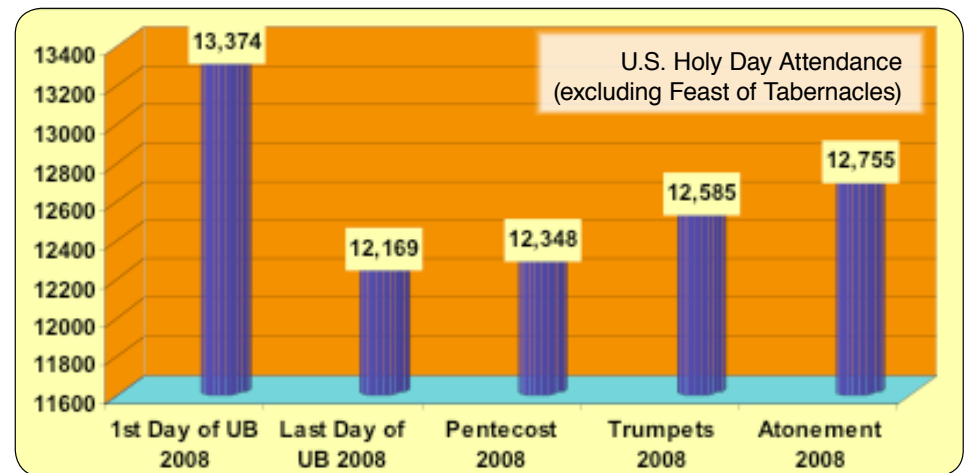
In reviewing the monthly reports we also noted that some congregations were having large numbers of new contacts due in part to either a *World News and Prophecy* seminar or a *Good News* seminar in the area. Subscribers are invited to attend a lecture or a series of lectures and, in some cases, follow-up Bible studies.

The chart to the left shows the 11 congregations with the highest number of new contacts for the last six months of 2008. Five of these had a seminar with invited

subscribers—Minneapolis, Minnesota; Redlands and San Diego, California; Columbus and Cambridge, Ohio.

We are not aware of any special activity to cause the rise in new contacts in the remaining six congregations.

In addition, the graphs to the right show Holy Day attendance in the United States in 2008 and the attendance of our 10 largest congregations.



Our highest attendance for a Holy Day in 2008 was the First Day of Unleavened Bread and the lowest attendance was the Last Day of Unleav-

ened Bread. The figures for the second graph are based on the highest Sabbath attendance for each month averaged over 12 months. UN

"Editorial," continued from page 1

really useful sessions. I found the material on search engine optimization and on marketing particularly interesting."

This year most seminars were presented by experienced personnel in the home office, but other personnel will be called upon in the future to share their knowledge and expertise. We will bring in instructors and known authorities whenever we can.

On this occasion Scott Moss, an elder and professional writer and manager, was invited to make a presentation on effective writing that emphasizes benefits and motivates people to act. Mr. Moss's insightful presentation was very well received and will be tremendously helpful.

"I thought this year's conference was the best we've had. It had a good mix of education and opportunities for creative discussion on how to better fulfill our commission to preach the gospel to the world," commented David Treybig, managing editor of *Vertical Thought*.

Vertical Thought

On Thursday, the staff of *Vertical Thought* occupied the conference room for a working session to plan the issues for the next year. The *Vertical Thought* team also discussed the possibility of producing a booklet designed to reach young people.

"I recalibrate my writing skills based on the different perspectives and approaches presented at the editorial conference," said contributing writer Amanda Stiver. "Brainstorming in person with my fellow *Vertical Thought* staff members builds a team atmosphere that isn't always possible by telephone conference.

"The time spent visiting in person with other writers in the Church helps me to focus my writ-



Roger Foster



Michelle de Campos, Jorge de Campos and Shaun Venish

Discussion over dinner: Steve Myers, Jerold and Mary Ann Aust, Melvin Rhodes, Dennis Horlick and David Palmer

ing and draws me back into the importance of the work God's Church does—expressing the message of the coming Kingdom as clearly as possible to those who have yet to be called."

Bible Reading Program

One item of regular interest is the Bible Reading Program. The BRP's main writer and contributor, Tom Robinson, has been fully

occupied with updating and editing numerous booklets, along with his regular duties of helping to edit *The Good News* and *Vertical Thought*. His time to work on the BRP has also been limited due to various circumstances in his life over the past year. We are ready to start the New Testament, and Mr. Robinson wants to have a good head start before returning to a regular publishing schedule. He really hopes to proceed soon.

It is always our intent to make conferences like this as profitable as we can. This year we received our marching orders from the Strategic Plan, which calls for certain focused training. Under the proclamation goal, strategy #5 says,

"Train media staff to highlight the uniqueness of the true gospel message and thus explain and emphasize the life-changing benefits of God's way." Strategy #8 says, "Communicate who we are and what we do to increase audience awareness of the benefits of God's way." Therefore, the twin issues of the unique elements of the gospel and the benefits of God's way became our primary focus for this conference. In-depth training will, of course, involve much more education and discussion, but we wanted to make a start.

Thank you for your prayers for the success of this conference. We believe that God blessed the dialogue and that these discussions will produce fruit. Please continue to ask God to guide and strengthen us as we try to do the work He has given us to do. UN

Larry Salyer is Media and Communications Services operation manager.

“Managing Your Finances” Seminars Held in Tampa



Five presenters offered valuable and practical information at the “Managing Your Finances” seminars in Tampa (photo by Wanda Smith)

by Wanda Smith

On Sunday, March 8, the Tampa, Florida, congregation hosted “Managing Your Finances” seminars. The event featured five presenters from three congregations in south-central Florida who are professionals in their respective fields.

Mike Moore, president of RCI Recruitment Solutions, began the day with an energetic presentation on how to get a job and keep one. He also gave suggestions on how to choose a career. He emphasized that even with unemployment edging higher in our country, the clear majority of people have jobs. He also said that many companies use downturns in the economy to upgrade the quality of their workforces by laying off their less productive people and hiring ones with better talent and skills.

Barry Korthuis, chief financial officer and an operating partner of Mangrove Equity, next spoke on the importance of budgeting. He explained how one can track his income and prepare for future expenses. A critical point to remember is that small spending decisions impact the outcome of your future, said Mr. Korthuis.

Don Ballo, president of Ballo Insurance, then gave some tips to keep in mind when purchasing insurance, which included increasing the deductible on your car insurance,

how to take advantage of COBRA insurance if you are laid off, and the difference between term, whole life and universal life insurance.

He also suggested an inexpensive way to protect oneself against financial loss through identity theft by paying a small fee to block access to your financial records that are held by the three major credit bureaus. When there is a block on your file, informa-

tion will then only be given out by these bureaus if the access code (set up by you) is provided. Someone who steals your Social Security number would generally then not be approved for a major purchase without providing the access code.

Molly Shrauner, stockbroker and financial advisor, then spoke on the safest investments under volatile conditions. She explained the differences between stocks, bonds and commodities.

Bob Orosz, president of Morningstar Property Management Services, Inc., then explained how TRIM (Truth in Millage) notices on property taxes work and how to determine if they are fair in the current economy. He also spoke about residency, management and contractor opportunities via federal monies being directed to low-income housing.

Midway through the day, we had a lovely potluck lunch of sandwiches, cheeses, veggies and fruits. There were also drawings for door prizes—two financial planning notebooks and a large gift basket.

The day concluded with a panel discussion in which the speakers fielded questions from the audience. Many of those in attendance expressed appreciation for the depth of the information provided and the opportunity to have their specific questions answered. **UN**

Good News Lecture Series in Central Ohio to Continue in June

by Randy Stiver

Ever since late May 2008 the Columbus and Cambridge, Ohio, congregations have been “stirring the pot” of the local *Good News* readership. The last lecture of the four-part series was delivered in early March when Media and Communications Services operation manager Larry Salyer traveled to Columbus to share the speaking duties with Columbus and Cambridge pastor Randy Stiver.

Results of lecture attendance have been very encouraging. A total of 40 *Good News* readers came to the Columbus and 26 to the Cambridge meetings. Long-term results included three prospective members in Cambridge with one baptism shortly before Passover.

The topics for the lectures were drawn in succession from Christ’s summary of the four elements of the true gospel in Mark 1:14-15:

- The time is fulfilled.
- The Kingdom of God is at hand.
- Repent.
- Believe the gospel.

About two weeks prior to each lecture an invitation was mailed to each *Good News* subscriber in the congregations’ zip codes. Lectures were delivered in two 40- to 45-minute segments with a short break in between. The congregations provided light refreshments afterward. Gratifyingly, the *GN* readers consistently stayed for a half hour to over an hour to visit with the members and ministry.

Initially, the lectures were held on a weeknight and spaced quarterly. The final lecture took place on Sabbath afternoon so most of the brethren could attend with their children. This gave the new attendees a better view of the kind of people who believe and live this way of life.

The Columbus congregation’s webmaster Bryan Molnar set up a Web site for the *GN* lectures: www.centralohio-gnl.org. During the two weeks following the last lecture, follow-up Bible studies on topics related to belief and faith were presented on weeknights with several additional new attendees.

Now the Columbus and Cambridge congregations stand ready to “stir the pot” again! Plans are underway to begin in late June another four-part series for 2009-2010.

The overall topics will be the same in sequence, with the messages packaged differently from the first series. The Sabbath afternoon lecture with multiple follow-up Bible studies serves as the delivery format.

We thank God deeply for blessing this program of preaching the gospel locally, and we seek His continued divine support. **UN**

San Antonio Welcomes 280 for World News and Prophecy Seminar

by Sam Urbina

Sabbath, Jan. 31, was a day of excitement for the San Antonio, Texas, congregation. Long hours of preparation were coming to fruition for the area’s first *World News and Prophecy* seminar.



Attendees listen to seminars given by *World News and Prophecy* contributors Darris McNeely and Robin Webber

Close to 2,900 subscribers in the South and Central Texas area, including San Antonio and Austin, received an invitation. The attendance high was at about 280. About 250 were United Church of God members, while during the day, at least 25 other Sabbath-keeping church members as well as 16 to 20 public visitors attended.

The guest speakers were *World News and Prophecy* contributors Darris McNeely and Robin Webber. With Gary Petty, pastor of the San Antonio, Austin and Waco congregations, serving as host, the morning began with regular Sabbath services.

The opening message of the morning, “A Heart Toward Prophecy,” was presented by Mr. McNeely. Special music was performed by the San Antonio congregational choir, who performed “Sing Halle-

lujah!” under the direction of Mike Isaac. Following was the morning’s main message, “Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem,” given by Mr. Webber.

A luncheon was sponsored by the San Antonio congregation’s outreach committee, planners of the day’s events. Beautifully decorated tables in purple and yellow made for a lovely, relaxing lunch break.

The afternoon program included three one-hour seminar sessions, beginning with “Jesus’ Olivet Prophecy: Part 1,” by Mr. McNeely. Then Mr. Webber spoke on “O Jerusalem, You Who Bring Glad Tidings.” The concluding message was “Jesus’ Olivet Prophecy: Part 2,” presented by Mr. McNeely. Mr. Petty offered a few closing remarks, follow by a prayer at the end. **UN**



Darris McNeely

Pastor Visits Scattered Brethren in Several War Zones



■ During a month-long trip in January and February, Joel Meeker visited Church brethren and new contacts in French-speaking, sub-Saharan Africa and more brethren on two islands in the Indian Ocean.

by Joel Meeker

Arriving in Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), my first destination, I spent the rainy Sabbath visiting two groups. One is a fledgling group consisting of a couple of baptized members and several new people meeting in Adiopodoumé on the outskirts of Abidjan, the economic capital of the country. Because there were many new people, I spoke on the nature of the gospel during our Bible study and then answered their questions for quite a while.

We then drove on to La Mé, the agricultural station and village where most of our brethren in Côte d'Ivoire live.

On the way we had a minor car accident. The wiper blades on the taxi were so old that they merely rearranged the water on the windshield, so the driver didn't see a fellow pulling a full barrel of water on his handcart. We hit the cart, sending the cart-man—along with his barrel—flying forward. The barrel landed straight up, but the cart was damaged.

There was a scuffle and lots of yelling, and then some soldiers arrived

with AK-47s and took charge. In the end the cart-man said he would accept 2,000 francs, about US\$4, as compensation. Everyone looked at me, with my deep Western pockets. I was happy it took so little to resolve the situation, and I handed over the money.

During Sabbath services in La Mé, I spoke on the fundamental doctrines of Hebrews 6, and afterwards showed a video from our Youth Corps Middle Eastern project last summer. Our brethren were fascinated to see the many biblical sites we had visited and hear my explanations.

Sunday, Paul Tia and I started out for a visit up-country to the town of Man. There is a group of Sabbathkeepers there that found us through relations in La Mé and have begun observing the annual biblical festivals that we observe. Man is located in what was, until recently, rebel-controlled territory during the civil war. It is nearly 600 kilometers (373 miles) from Abidjan.

The area is plagued by a great deal of instability and corruption. Some of the former rebels have been allowed to act as paramilitary militia in loose cooperation with the government forces. They augment their meager income by taking protection money and levying "fees" on visitors.

The inn where we stayed had been picked clean during the fighting. Everything had been looted—the beds, tables and chairs, and even the plates, flatware, pots and pans in the restaurant. The restaurant still wasn't

able to reopen, but the hotel owners had replaced the beds so we had someplace to sleep at least.

We visited the group in the village of Blolé 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) outside of Man. There were 25 people present for my visit, during which I spoke about the work of the United Church of God, referencing Matthew 28:19-20 and Matthew 24:14 in particular. A translation into the local language was provided for those who didn't understand French. I took questions for about two hours on a wide variety of topics, and we also went through the chronology of the crucifixion and resurrection week. They were especially excited to go through that subject systematically. There were questions about baptism, how UCG functions and what was happening in other parts of the world.

They shared some of their scarce food with me during a late lunch, during which I answered more questions.

The next day we stopped briefly at another small village called Dwélé to visit some people associated with their group. Then we headed to Yamousoukro, the capital city, on the long road back to Abidjan. We needed to fill the car with diesel at the one town along the way likely to have it, but there was only one diesel pump working in the whole city. All the other stations were out of fuel. We had to wait in line nearly an hour to get the diesel and were relieved when we finally had a full tank. The things we take for granted!

Back in Abidjan that night, I took a taxi to a supermarket near my hotel, right at the time President Obama took the oath of office. There were crowds of people inside and out, wherever there was a television, with amazed, concentrated expressions on their faces, as they watched in rapt silence.

People had been commenting to me all through the trip that they couldn't believe the United States had elected an African (their words) as president, and they were so happy. And they love America, they said!

Congo

I flew next to Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo via Nairobi on the east coast of the continent. That's a long detour, but there are very few flights that connect certain cities in Africa.

Fighting was still going on in eastern Congo, and the UN

presence in Kinshasa was very pronounced.

The many UN barracks in the city were surrounded by a high wall topped with razor wire, and the guard towers were manned by soldiers armed with heavy machine guns on tripods. The city's infrastructure is disintegrating

attended by 14 people at the home of Jocelyn Prodigue.

Sunday we visited some potential Festival lodgings and made other pre-Feast arrangements in a resort town called Flic en Flac. The day was a Tamil religious festival; there were colorful processions disrupting traffic all over



in a sad way. Parts of the road were almost impassable in a light vehicle.

I had meetings with the local leadership to work on getting the congregation organized and legally recognized. About 50 people met for Sabbath services, a mix of two groups.

One is relatively new to the truth and still learning many things. They found UCG through the Internet. The other group is composed of long-time members who go back to our previous association. They have just recently come into contact with UCG. Melding these groups without a local elder in the area will present its challenges, but we seem to be off to a good start. For some of the members this was the first ministerial visit they had had since 2004.

We will continue doing our best to serve these brethren in this poor, war-torn and worn-down country.

Zambia and South Africa

My next stops were Zambia and South Africa. For a little over a week I assisted Jim Franks, André Van Belkum and Morgen Kreidemann with leadership seminars in both countries. It was encouraging to see the commitment and the ability of the men and women who took time off to participate in these three-day conferences. (For more information on the Southern Africa leadership conference, see "Workshops Boost Leadership in Southern Africa," by Jim Franks, in the March/April *United News*.)

Mauritius

From South Africa, where I was delayed an extra day due to a cyclone in the Indian Ocean, I flew to the island of Mauritius. We had Sabbath services and a Q&A Bible study, which were

the island. Some celebrants appeared to have pierced themselves with many small knives (or large needles) through their tongues and on the skin of their backs. It looked very painful. I prefer the Feast of Tabernacles!

While in Mauritius I also had pre-baptismal counseling sessions with two ladies. That is always encouraging.

Reunion

My next stop was the French island of Reunion about 150 miles west of Mauritius. We have one married couple of Church members there, Laval and Patricia Prodigue. They are the only members on their whole island and have been part of the Church for 20 years. They can only see other brethren when they are able to travel elsewhere. They were overjoyed to receive this visit. We fellowshipped almost nonstop for the two days I was with them. Through the Internet they can access sermons and literature and do so frequently. Laval knows our Church Web sites better than I do, but they do feel isolated physically.

Many thanks to those of you who support, by your prayers, those of us who travel in God's work on behalf of the United Church of God. **UN**

To read more about Joel Meeker's trip to French-speaking Africa, visit his blog at www.travelpod.com/travel-blog/joelmeeker/10/tpod.html.



After services in Kinshasa, Congo



The Prodigues with their son Thierry in Reunion

Education Program Observes Holy Days in the Holy Land

by Leslie Schwartz

In April, 50 Church members from Australia, England, Canada and the United States shared Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread as part of the 2009 Israel Educational Tour.

After arriving at the Mediterranean coast in Tel Aviv, the group departed for northern Israel to visit several biblical sites during the days leading up to Passover. During the first part of the trip, we traveled to the remains of the ancient cities of Caesarea Maritima, Acre, Megiddo and Capernaum where the biblical history of these sites was recounted to us by an Israeli guide. Our group also had the opportunity to sail on the Sea of Galilee in a reconstructed biblical boat and enjoyed a traditional Israeli meal of fish and loaves together in a nearby village.

Spending Passover, the Night to Be Much Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread in Jesus Christ's hometown of Nazareth, we were able to deepen our biblical and historical understanding by learning together through these observances and times of fellowship with each other. From Nazareth, our group took a day trip to the ruins at Sepphoris, the capital of Herod Antipas's government in 4 B.C., as well as Cana, the site of Jesus' first miracle where He turned water into wine.

While traveling north into the Golan Heights, we saw spectacular views of Mount Hermon and the lush Hula Valley region. Many travelers were impressed by the fertile terrain of northern Israel as we passed acres of wildflowers, vineyards, olive groves, banana trees and other agri-

culture typical of this region. Our group also hiked around the Banias waterfalls at Caesarea Philippi and visited the ancient city of Tel Dan, which was once the most important city of the northern part of the kingdom of Israel.

As we traveled throughout the Holy Land, Ralph Levy and David Johnson also shared topical studies with our group to bring the landscape to life. We recounted Elijah's duel with the priests of Baal while visiting Mount Carmel, studied lessons from the Beatitudes that Jesus preached in the Sermon on the Mount and learned about the history of the Dead Sea Scrolls before we visited the caves of Qumran.

After observing the Sabbath in Nazareth, we traveled south along the Jordan River Valley, stopping to see the excavations at Beit She'an as well as the caves in Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. Traveling further south along the western coast of the Dead Sea, we hiked around the fortress of Masada where the Jewish-Roman conflict occurred in A.D. 73 after the First Jewish-Roman War.

On the way to Jerusalem, we stopped for a float in the salty waters of the Dead Sea at Ein Gedi. Some adventurous travelers in our group even coated themselves in a thick layer of Dead Sea mineral mud!



Leslie Schwartz stands on the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem (photo by Terry Franke)



David Johnson delivers a message at the Mount of the Beatitudes (photo by Terry Franke)

Arriving in Jerusalem, we spent the day touring the walled Old City and ascended to the Temple Mount, visiting the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

We also visited the Western Wall (*HaKotel HaMa'aravi*) where orthodox Jews come to offer prayers based on their belief that it is the location closest to the temple that was destroyed in A.D. 70. Walking along the ancient Cardo within the Old City, we heard a montage of international languages being spoken in the *souk*, or market, that displayed a myriad of stalls selling handmade crafts, woven and embroidered tapestries, pottery, dried fruits and spices, among other goods. That evening, we returned to the Old City to experience a sound-and-light show projected on the stone walls of the Tower of David followed by a nighttime tour inside the Western Wall tunnels.

While in Jerusalem, we also had the opportunity to visit some famous museums, including Yad Vashem ("a memorial and a name") Holocaust Museum and Children's Memorial as well as the Shrine of the Book at the

Israel Museum, where the Dead Sea Scrolls are displayed. On our last day of touring, our group toured the City of David and went spelunking through Hezekiah's Tunnel, which was created as an aqueduct during the reign of Hezekiah around 701 B.C. Armed with flashlights and water shoes, we had quite the adventure, walking the 533 meters through the carved limestone tunnel leading from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam.

Later that afternoon as our group descended from the Mount of Olives into the Garden of Gethsemane, we had a clear view of the Temple Mount and the Old City of Jerusalem that we had visited the day before.

As we paused to take in the scenery, the powerful promise of the return of Jesus Christ and the coming of the New Jerusalem was present in everyone's mind and left a lasting impression.

Throughout our travels around Israel, we not only gained new educa-



Michelle Quant (photo by David Johnson)

tional insight into the Bible and Holy Land but also developed lasting relationships and memories within our spiritual family. Overall, we had a remarkable, enriching experience—drawing closer to God and to each other! **UN**

Next year during the Days of Unleavened Bread, the Education Travel Program plans to offer a biblical study tour of Turkey. Watch for more information in upcoming issues of United News.



Charles Franke at Tel Megiddo, the site of Armageddon (photo by Terry Franke)



Olive grove in Sepphoris (photo by David Johnson)



At the Western Wall (photo by Terry Franke)



The Sea of Galilee (photo by David Johnson)



Tour visits ruins at Capernaum (photo by Terry Franke)



Orthodox Jews pray at what is considered the most important existing holy place in Judaism, the Western Wall (photo by David Johnson)

Treasure Digest

Courage to Change the World

Some years ago, when Dan Rather was a news anchor with the *CBS Evening News*, he tried a number of different sign-offs. Among them was the single word, "Courage."

We often seek examples of courage in tragic circumstances. We see it all the time in news-casts and newspaper reports after terrible circumstances.

Whether we would stand up to intervene in a possibly dangerous situation, courage is a hallmark, indeed it is a requirement, of our Christian calling. In the book of Joshua we read of God telling Joshua three times to have courage going into the land God promised Israel (1:6-7, 9).

Courage is a theme repeated in God's encouragement of His people. We read of another example in the book of Daniel 10:19, where God tells Daniel to "be strong, yes, be strong!" Daniel was completely overwhelmed in understanding the vision of the king of the North and the king of the South down through time and the death and destruction that would follow these conflicts.

In 1 Corinthians 16:13 Paul says to "be brave, be strong." The Greek word for "strong" can mean to empower or increase in vigor. That same verse in the Modern King James Version says: "Watch! Stand fast in the faith! Be men! Be strong!" In Ephesians 3:16-21 we are told that we will be strengthened by God's Spirit.

We know that only God's attributes will stand the test of time. How well do we then exercise God's way of life in our daily actions? If physical strength only profits for a little while (1 Timothy 4:8), how do we have a chance spiritually? A spiritual muscle such as courage, put to a similar conditioning regimen as a physical muscle, will only get stronger the more it is used.

It takes courage to make good decisions, to admit when we are wrong, to be a good role model and to face our fears and challenges. It takes courage to live according to God's instruction. It takes courage to not go along with the world around us. It takes courage to walk by faith. It takes courage to be a Noah, Moses, Abraham, Sarah, Rahab or Paul. These men and women were flesh and blood. They had fears and concerns like many of us have—and yet with courage in God they changed the world.

Courage will give us the strength to stand up under the pressures of Satan's world. Courage will keep us focused on God's Word. Courage will put aside the fears of failing or of looking stupid in the world's eyes. Now is the time to develop and strengthen courage, so that when we are faced with an overwhelming situation we will stand.

Dan Dowd

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

Spend Time in Nature!

When you take a stroll outdoors, do you ever wonder why it makes you feel so good? Connecting with nature can actually improve your health and well-being.

This theory that contact with nature restores health is called ecotherapy. *ScienceDaily* reported that, according to the 2000 census, American office workers spend an average of 52 hours per week at their desks or workstations (May 19, 2008). Studies on job satisfaction have shown that workers who spend longer hours in office environments—often under artificial light in windowless offices—report reduced job satisfaction and increased stress levels. Employees with window views of nature, however, had less job stress and a better overall well-being.

Lawrence St. Leger, in the September 2003 *Health Promotional International* journal, cites many different studies showing that having a window with a view of nature improved the lives of office workers, prisoners in cells and hospital patients. Blood pressure, stress levels



and cholesterol decreased, while outlook on life improved when spending time in nature.

Studies have also proven how effective being outside is for children. Dr. Stephen R. Kellert of Yale University devotes a chapter to the subject of "Nature and Childhood Development" in his book *Building for Life: Designing and Understanding the Human-Nature Connection* (2005). Dr. Kellert states, "Play in nature, particularly during the critical period of middle childhood, appears to be an especially important time for developing the capacities for creativity, problem-solving, and emotional and intellectual development" (p. 83).

When God created Adam and Eve, He placed them in the midst of a beautiful garden. God created the colors, sounds and smells to promote calm, serenity and well-being.

Spending time in nature puts us in a state of awe of how great God is and in wonderment of how God created all of it! We simply cannot fathom it all. David spent many hours in God's

creation, reflecting on Him. In Psalm 40:5 he wrote, "Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done."

In God's creation, we meet Him in a new and powerful way. So turn off the TV, get off the couch, go outside during lunch break and take long walks that will draw you even closer to God. It is not only good for your spirit and your relationship with God, but it's also good for your physical and mental health.

Janet Treadway

Cincinnati, Ohio, North congregation

Cold Case File Closed

I recently read two books written by authors who had experienced the murder of family members. Each book chronicled the author's arduous and painful journey through rage cooled to a cold, stony anger and finally to a peace of mind made possible by forgiveness.

Turning the Hearts . . .

Authority—Respect and Obedience

This month we continue with the fourth lesson we can learn in the family, how to submit to and respect authority.

God is quite clear about authority in the home. He loves the family and wants it to run smoothly. In order to function smoothly, God has appointed the husband to be the leader of the home (Ephesians 5:23-24). He is the head of the family and is the one who is to lead. He and his wife are to oversee and teach the children (Ephesians 6:1-2).

In a healthy home, children will see their parents working together in a healthy, loving manner. While the final word rests with the husband, he will want to have plenty of input from his wife as well as everyone else in the family before making any major decisions. His loving manner will generate a willingness to obey and a respect for his position.

While growing up, I knew my parents loved me and would want the best for me. As a result, I had respect for people in authority—police, teachers, principals, government leaders and my parents. Respect for them as a youngster made it easier for me to respect God our Father and Jesus Christ in their awesome offices of authority.

Here is a meaningful quote from the book *The Family*: "In a good family there are always present, without being obnoxious, the controls that constitute the essence of good government. Discipline is necessary, not primarily for its contribution to family harmony, but because it must be learned as a quality essential in all walks of life.

"Discipline without love begets resentment; it is the devoted and skilful blending of the two that develops children into adults able to cope with the environment in self-reliance, self-mastery and courage."

The wisdom of the Proverbs brings this pithy saying: "Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul" (Proverbs 29:17).

When properly executed, loving authority will bring obedience and respect to those who exercise it.

May we who are parents practice that loving authority so that our children may grow up to respect and obey those in power who they will encounter throughout life!



Gary E. Antion

Answer to last issue's puzzle:

Who takes away the sin of the world?

(Hint: Read John 1:29)

LAMB OF GOD

Wow! I thought. I've never been through such a horrible experience. In fact, I don't even have a lot of people who I think should ask for my forgiveness. Do I? I start rummaging hit and miss through my filing cabinet of stored memories. My mind's eye lands on a file labeled FAMILY, and when I look in it, there are the usual sibling things and the "my parents don't understand me" things, but they had long been resolved.

I continue flipping through FEAST, WEDDING and one marked MISC. until I detect a file tucked way back in the dark recesses of my hippocampus and amygdala. I slowly pull it out—a worn folder stamped in red letters COLD CASE and the words "Unresolved Past Offenses" burned into its tab. When I open it, there they are, all the pain of offenses that have never been resolved; and the accompanying emotions they trigger wound me once again. My thankful mood now turns dark, and I relive each occurrence in vivid, emotional detail.

In his book *Five Steps to Forgiveness*, Dr. Everett Worthington identifies the state I'm in as one of rumination. He writes, "Rumination, the process of reflection on what's hurt us, changes the hot emotions of fear and anger into cold emotions of unforgiveness" (p. 26).

"Unforgiveness," he continues, "is defined as delayed emotions involving resentment, bitterness, residual anger, residual fear, hatred, hostility, and stress." Of course, God in His great wisdom warns about such a frame of mind in Ephesians 4:26-27: "Be angry, and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil."

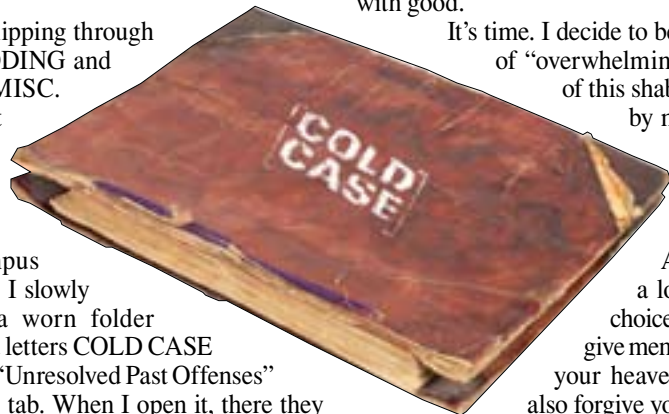
Now what do I do? No one enjoys this frame of mind. It demands relief. Dr. Worthington offers two solutions: "First, you could chip away at it by replacing a little unforgiveness with a

little forgiveness over hundreds of experiences. Second, you could whack unforgiveness with a giant dose of empathy, sympathy, compassion, or love and simply overwhelm it" (p. 33). The consummate example of this is found in the words of our dying Lord: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). Paul admonishes us in Romans 12:21: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

It's time. I decide to begin the process of "overwhelming" the contents of this shabby folder, piece by malignant piece, until the process of forgiveness is complete. After all there's a lot riding on my choice: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

I want this COLD CASE marked CLOSED AND FORGIVEN.

Karen Meeker
St. Louis, Missouri, congregation



Israeli radio reported that the military wing of Islamic Jihad and Imad Mughniyeh Group took responsibility for the act.

I immediately felt a twinge of rage in my heart. What kind of evil, malevolent group decides to incite terror in a village by brutally murdering a teenager? I wanted others to read the article I posted and click on more links to learn about the complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

What it produced instead was a short comment from a former classmate of mine from college who was born in Palestine. She simply said, "The things occupation makes you do."

Was she saying the boy's murder was an effect of Israeli occupation, something that was inevitable because of years of living in an oppressed environment?

I reflected on this statement and on my own experience living in Israel as a student this past summer. The feeling of tension among so many opposing and hate-filled groups washed over me again. The pressure was so heavy that it was sometimes hard to breathe.

Blame is the currency of the conflict. It's passed from one individual or group to the next, never fully stopping at any one destination. It's such an infectious commodity that one runs out of fingers to point.

Comment after comment, we continued to debate cause and effect, the power of choice and the influence of our circumstances. She is correct that I cannot understand fully the emotional and psychological effects of oppression. I've always lived in a society that promoted lib-

erty. Still, what both sides of the conflict lack is a genuine understanding of personal accountability.

At the end of our discussion, I was emotionally exhausted, but we came to an agreement. No matter what circumstances one may live in or one may be influenced by, each of us still has the power to choose our actions, to decide to give in to hatred or to fight it and enact positive change around us.

It's a question of heart: "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29).

God's gift of His Holy Spirit changes hearts and makes it possible to love our neighbors, even when they are our enemies. My friend does not have the understanding of God's plan of salvation now. But one day she will, and so will billions of other people affected by Satan's influence in this world, and then positive change can finally take effect.

We need more than ever to pray, "Your Kingdom come."

Elizabeth Cannon
Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregation



The Solution to Conflict: A Question of Heart

Facebook is a number of things—social network, marketing tool, time waster, even a think tank for political debate.

One day I posted an article from *BBC News* about a 13-year-old boy who was murdered by a man wielding an axe. It would be tragic in any account, but what increases the weight of this heartrending story is that the boy was a young Jew living in a settlement in the West Bank, and the man was a Palestinian who lived in the area.

Share Your Treasures!

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

Children's Corner

1. "I will never _____ you nor _____ you" (Hebrews 13:5).
2. "Be of good _____, and He shall _____ your _____" (Psalm 27:14).
3. "When He is _____, we shall be like _____, for we shall _____ Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).
4. "_____ not, for I am _____ you" (Isaiah 41:10).

GOD'S PROMISES

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

Children's Corner

5. "He gives _____ to the _____, and to those who have no _____ He _____ strength" (Isaiah 40:29).
6. "_____ is the same _____, _____, and _____" (Hebrews 13:8).
7. "My God shall _____ all your _____" (Philippians 4:19).

Word Search by Elizabeth Cannon, Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregation



From **the Word**

Proverbs: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Times



© 2009 Jupiterimages Corporation

■ Proverbs is not just a book for the youth; it's a book of practical, timeless wisdom for all of us. What can Proverbs teach us about becoming a mature Christian in today's society?

by **Mark Winner**

For nearly 45 years, for as long as he was alive, my father taught me through his words and example what he believed I needed to know in order to be successful in this life and the one to come. Not unlike any other Christian parent, he wanted the best for me, his son.

One of the areas he placed the most emphasis on in our home was attitude. As the Bible points out, he wanted me to know and to understand that apart from a healthy attitude I simply could not be successful in life. Perhaps I could be successful in terms of how the world measures success, but I couldn't be ultimately successful in what matters most—living a mature Christian life that leads to living eternally as a spirit being.

Attitude and Wisdom Are Intricately Connected

Our loving Father in heaven expects each of His chosen people to exhibit an attitude of submission to

Him (James 4:7). If we are working hard on developing this submissive attitude, we are much more likely to appreciate the value of God's wisdom. By doing so, we begin to make wiser decisions and become more successful as Christians.

Conversely, by actively working on making wise decisions, we will also reflect a much more teachable attitude.

Sure, there are many other passages that teach us what godly wisdom is (James 3:17), but no place in the Bible focuses more specifically on the subject of wisdom than Proverbs.

A Book of Practical Godly Wisdom

Knowing all we face on a daily basis today, it's nice to know that we can turn to Proverbs and find specific instruction that offers straightforward and precise answers to so many of our questions or concerns.

For example, do I tell my friend Joe that he is doing something that is violating God's law when I know he is? Well, that depends on whether or not Joe cares about God's law (Proverbs 9:8).

How about this question: What does God say carries value? Money? Power? Beautiful possessions? The answer is quite clear in Proverbs 8:10-11. What God values as true wealth

is His instruction and spiritual wisdom.

The book of Proverbs also reinforces what other passages in the Bible tell us. The biblical principle found in Galatians 6:7, "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap," appears throughout the Bible (Proverbs 1:33; 2:21-22; 10:4). It is important we learn and understand this principle, because Satan (and society around us) would like us to believe that the principle of reaping what we sow is not true.

Proverbs is a book of godly wisdom. It promotes wisdom, instruction, understanding, righteousness, justice, equity, prudence, knowledge, discretion, learning and sound counsel. *The New Webster Encyclopedic*

Dictionary defines wisdom as "power of judging rightly and following the soundest course of action, based on knowledge, experience, and understanding, etc."

It would be fair to say godly wisdom is "doing or practicing the law of God—doing the right thing at the right time with the right people or person."

We aren't far removed from an entire segment of our population growing up having honed one skill more than any other—that of vocalizing opinions.

There are two Hebrew words for wisdom found in the first chapter of Proverbs. *Chokmah* found in verse 2 means skillful or wise; and *sakal* found in verse 3 means to be circumspect, expert, prudent, skillful, wise or guided wittingly.

Although Proverbs is commonly known as a book written for youth or directed towards them, I find myself continually

rereading it as time passes. Reading a proverb may take only a few seconds, but applying a proverb can take a lifetime. Usually a verse or two are all it takes before I have much to think about and take to God in prayer.

You may have noticed as I have, the influence that television has had on our society. I'm about convinced that we aren't far removed from an entire segment of our population growing up

that saying every time I read Proverbs 17:28. It takes wisdom to know what to say and what not to say, when to say something and when to refrain.

Proverbs not only draws our attention to what should or should not come from our lips but, even before that, what should or should not be in our minds. Proverbs 15:26 reinforces that good words come from good minds. In other words, if our thoughts

No place in the Bible focuses more specifically on the subject of wisdom than the book of Proverbs.

having honed one skill more than any other—that of vocalizing opinions. The prevailing school of thought seems to promote saying whatever comes to mind, regardless of its worth.

In nations such as the United States, Great Britain and Australia, there is widespread pride in "freedom of speech." It is reinforced through media in schools, universities and most homes. Although I appreciate the ability to teach the truth of God and be protected by law, I also recognize that God teaches in Proverbs, as well as throughout the Bible, that "freedom of speech" is not the end of the story.

A Practical Application of Proverbs

Proverbs 17:28 states the following, "Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive."

Many years ago someone told me, "Better to be thought a fool than open your mouth and remove all doubt." How many times have you blurted out a comment only to regret it just as soon as it escapes your lips? I think of

are where they should be, our speech will reflect that. Conversely, the same can be said if our thoughts are not appropriate. Nothing crosses our lips without first entering our mind.

If my father were still alive today, I know he would still be reminding me about the importance of attitude, of making wise decisions and of growing in character. He would tell me about the importance of humility and being submissive to God. And He would most definitely remind me of how important it is to maintain a strong prayer and Bible study life.

When I read Proverbs, I find this same set of instructions. Every time I turn there, I'm reminded of the expectations our Heavenly Father has for you and me. I'm encouraged to have this reminder and set of "how to" instructions. Proverbs isn't just for teens, or for any specific age group, nor is it passé. Proverbs is a book of ancient wisdom for modern times, hands-on instruction for anyone at any age who chooses to grow in wisdom. Proverbs speaks to all of us. **UN**

Mark Winner is the pastor of the Louisville, Lexington and Henderson, Kentucky, congregations.



© 2009 Jupiterimages Corporation

Where Are You From?



1967 U.S. Marine Corps Boot Camp Graduation Book, courtesy of Skip Biro

History classes, for a U.S. Marine-in-training, were essential for instilling the mental toughness to overcome challenges—especially in the face of death.

■ Our spiritual battles are even more deadly than the physical battlefields of this world. That's why, in our spiritual boot camp, we need to be drilled on where we are from, as well as the use of the spiritual weapon God provides.

by Skip Biro

During the events leading up to our Lord's crucifixion, the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, asked an important question. "And [Pilate] went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, 'Where are you from?'" (John 19:9). As Christians, do we know where we come from? Do we know our spiritual heritage?

Do we know our spiritual roots? Does it even matter?

Some time ago I received an e-mail containing an essay regarding Marine Corps boot camp during the Vietnam War that caused me to reflect on my own experiences and how they relate to our Christian training.

I entered Marine Corps boot camp in 1967 as the war was ramping up. Marine casualties were climbing to hundreds per week as the war escalated, and replacements were needed so badly in the field that the normal 12-week boot camp was shortened to eight weeks. Deprived of one third of their training time, our drill instructors hurried over—or dropped completely—those classes without direct relevance to the war in Vietnam.

However, four areas of training remained intact: 1) physical

who had gone before us was so vital to the making of a Marine that, not only were there formal history classes, but our drill instructors taught us over and over again during every waking minute while we marched, as we were running, even when we (on rare occasions) took a few minutes' break.

Without knowing it, they were actually following God's teaching principle for parents found in Deuteronomy 11:19, "You shall teach them to your children, speaking of

them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

Why was the history of the Marine Corps and those who went before us so important to those of us who were still struggling in boot camp to earn the title of U.S. Marine? Without that foundation—that *esprit de corps*—instilled in each of us, we would not have the discipline and mental toughness to meet and overcome challenges to accomplish our mission—even in the face of death.

Spiritual Warfare

Make no mistake about it; the spiritual warfare we as Christians are engaged in today is even more dangerous than the jungles of Vietnam, the beaches of Iwo Jima or the deserts of Iraq. The enemy we fight as Christians is even more elusive, more cunning and more destructive—plus the stakes are even higher. Unfortunately, many of us personally know casualties in this spiritual war.

History Classes?

How many think of history classes as an essential part of Marine Corps training? Knowing the history of those

This is a real enemy we fight, and we must be prepared for the combat. Part of that preparation is learning and constantly reviewing where we come from and where we are going. Is this important to God?

It certainly was to Jesus Christ, as shown in John 8:14, "My witness is true, for I know from where I come from and where I am going." Christ had no doubt in His mind of His spiritual roots and no doubt of His mission or of the success of the mission.

As Christians, we, too, must become very familiar with the weapon God gives us... "living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword..."

We must be firmly rooted directly to God through His Son, Jesus Christ. That heritage has been handed down to us by such spiritual heavyweights as Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Esther, David, Elijah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Peter, John and Paul, just to name a few. This list does not even begin to scratch the surface of those men and women of God who, in spite of their faults and human frailties, overcame enormous obstacles to please God and grow into His children.

God in His Word is quick to show both their strengths and their weaknesses, the ups and the downs of their struggles to overcome themselves, this world and the ruler of this world that they might have the testimony of Enoch found in Hebrews 11:5, that they pleased God. This is a testimony we should all be striving for. But how well do we know our spiritual ancestors, and how can we get to know them better?

The Word as Our Weapon

As a Marine, I had to be very familiar with the weapons used by the Marine Corps. As Christians, we, too, must become very familiar with the weapon God gives us, found in Ephesians 6:17, "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

We must study and use the Word of God, which is, as the writer of Hebrews tells us in Hebrews 4:12, "living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The United Church of God has many resources available to help us in our study. Our *Bible Study Course* is an excellent start, and the ucg.org Web site contains many more resources.

For example, doing a word search for the "Profiles of Faith" series (originally printed in *The Good News* magazine) will locate the reprints and also take us to the ABC course for the book of Acts.

As a self-test, how much do we know about one of our lesser-known spiritual ancestors named Dorcas, also called Tabitha? There's a great article reprint there along with the ABC course on Acts to help us get to know her better.

The apostle John knew his spiritual heritage, as seen in 1 John 5:19: "We know that we are of God..." We have a spiritual heritage that not even the U.S. Marine Corps can match. Our spiritual roots go from eternity past to eternity future.

As the home page of ucg.org states, "We trace our origins to the Church that Jesus founded in the early first century. We follow the same teachings, doctrines and practices..."

May we all deepen our understanding of where we, as Christians, come from so that we can accomplish the mission our Father has given us. **UN**

Skip Biro is a member of the Raleigh, North Carolina, congregation.



© 2009 Jupiterimages Corporation

Finding the Right Words to Comfort

■ Sometimes it's hard to find the right words to say when someone you care about is going through a tremendous trial. Here are some tips to think about the next time you want to comfort a friend with a few kind words.

by **Connie Vreeland**

When was the last time you were in a situation in which you could not find the right words to say to someone because of the deep trial he or she was going through? Maybe you understood that you couldn't do anything to change the situation, but you still felt like you should say something.

Many of us find ourselves in that awkward position, and sometimes we fumble with our words or actions. God says to "comfort one another" and "bear one another's burdens" (1 Thessalonians 4:18; Galatians 6:2).

But how do we comfort and encourage effectively? If we have never been taught how to comfort, we probably do not know the right things to say or do. Many of us don't even think to consider what we should say until we are suddenly faced with the situation of offering condolences to someone in mourning or encouragement to someone in a tough trial.

Most people only want to talk intimately about their trial with their very best friends or possibly a minister, and the majority of us do not fall into one of those two categories. So what do we, as caring brothers and sisters in Christ, say to someone who could use a few words of encouragement so that he or she knows that we care?

While every person is different and experiences trials differently, the following list is a compilation of general tips to help you find the right words to say for those relationships and situations where you are not the primary confidant:

Put Yourself in Their Shoes

Ask yourself whether your words or actions would be helpful before you say or do them.

Skip "How Are You?"

Instead of asking in general how the person is doing (because in general, he or she is having a difficult time), ask if he or she is having a good day or skip the question all together. Start a conversation with something light like a compliment or something about the week, etc.

Acknowledge the Trial, but Do Not Belabor the Point

Sometimes someone can be so deep in his or her trial during the week that he or she just wants to be a "normal" Church member on the Sabbath. He or she may not want to have to talk about the trial and more than likely does

not want it to be the only topic. You should know the person well enough to be able to talk about something else.

Be Supportive but Not Nosy

You do not need to know the details about someone's trial to pray effectively. It is often very effective to tell the person you are here supporting him or her but that you will give him or her the space he or she needs. Let him or her take the lead regarding when to inform you of the details.

Be Specific

Don't burden the person with thinking of something you might be able to do. Instead, offer constructive help—not a general, "If there is anything I can ever do..." Think of what you are capable of doing and offer something specific such as preparing a meal, cutting the grass, grocery shopping for the person, doing errands, etc.

Give People Space

Allow them to cry. Do not lecture on how to "get over" the hurt—it does not help.

In fact, do not lecture at all.

Do Not Say, "I Know Exactly How You Feel"

You may have experienced a similar event, and you can relay that experience, but each person deals with a similar event differently. This statement usually creates an instant barrier of defensiveness in the person you are trying to console. It is better to say that you can relate in some way but you do not know exactly how he or she feels.

Remember that it is not about you; it is about helping the other person. If you know how he or she feels, you will find something else to say.

Honor the Memory of the Lost Loved One

If a person has lost someone close to him or her, do not list all the wonderful attributes of the lost loved one—the person in mourning already knows them and misses them.

Instead, it helps to relay a fond memory you personally have of that person. He or she who is mourning may learn something that he or she didn't know and that will add to his or her collection of positive memories instead of belaboring the list of attributes they are missing.

Avoid Preaching

It is always good to remember God's plan of salvation, but it is not the time to preach or lecture on it.



© 2009 Jupiterimages Corporation

The key is to have an attitude of service and selflessness, always keeping the person you are trying to comfort first and foremost in your mind.

Avoid Saying "Time Heals All Wounds"

It is true that time helps the wounds of a loss lessen, but it does not help to be told that when a person is in the stage of loss—the hurt is too fresh.

Stick to Normal Displays of Affection

If you do not know the person well enough to hug him or her on a normal basis, it might not be appropriate to hug the person during his or her time of trial.

Physical touch brings on emotion and sometimes people are "holding it together" and do not want to be triggered emotionally at church services or at a group setting.

Avoid Asking About Future Plans

Don't inquire about the future plans of those involved with a loss of a loved one. They probably haven't thought that far ahead yet, and it is overwhelming to think about it at that moment. Sometimes it is not appropriate at all.

Once Is Enough

Once you offer condolences, it is not necessary to do it over and over each time you see the person again.

Give Tokens of Comfort

Make the person smile by giving him or her a little note card with your favorite scripture or an inspirational scripture to think about during the

week. The point is to show you care by a small token, which can be done in countless small ways, making the other person smile or feel inspired.

Know When to End the Conversation

If you aren't sure when to leave the conversation, it is better to give your support and make it short. Doing so allows others to approach the person suffering, and usually others are waiting to give their support too.

Although we are instructed to be a close family with our brethren, we do

not have to be so close that we know every single detail of everyone's lives.

We need to know our role in the family and perform it. Oftentimes that means supporting a person or group of people in very uncomfortable situations, and we need to make sure we do our best to avoid making it more uncomfortable or harder to go through. The key is to have an attitude of service and selflessness, always keeping the person you are trying to comfort first and foremost in your mind. **UN**

Connie Vreeland is a member of the Ann Arbor, Michigan, congregation. After fighting cancer for over a year, Connie's husband, Mark, died on Oct. 11, 2008, at the age of 45. Her first husband, Jim Turnblad, also died of cancer in 2002.

Related Resources on Comforting

The resources listed below offer more information and helpful suggestions about comforting someone experiencing a trial.

"How Can We Help Those Who Are Grieving?"

What Happens After Death, page 55 sidebar.

gnmagazine.org/booklets/AD/whoaregrieving.asp

"A heavy burden lies on the hearts and minds of those who are grieving... There are practical ways we can help friends and loved ones who are grieving."

"How Can You Help When Someone Is Hurting?"

The Good News, March-April 1997.

gnmagazine.org/issues/gn09/howcanyouhelp.htm

"Knowing what to say to a hurt friend isn't easy... Although each crisis is different, we can respond tactfully, sincerely and appropriately."

"Ten Things You Can Say to Make Someone's Day"

The Good News, July-August 1998.

gnmagazine.org/issues/gn16/tenthings.htm

"Here are 10 phrases that help bring new perspective to a discouraged person's life."



Local Church Updates

Chicago Samples "Food Around the World"

After services on Feb. 14, 2009, the Chicago, Illinois, congregation hosted "Foods Around the World," featuring menus from Italy, Eastern Europe, India and Morocco.

The results were spectacular—wonderful food, lovely desserts and lots of fine fellowship.

Our little ones were full of excitement, for after dinner, we planned to reveal the identities of their "secret pals."



Desserts around the world

Notes and small gifts were anonymously exchanged between children and adult secret pals for four weeks, and our young congregants were anxious for the climax of the program. We lined the 10 children up on the stage and mentioned a few facts about each before revealing his or her pal. After photos of the pals were taken (www.ucgchicago.org), we then went on to play our first game of the evening, LCR, a simple dice game.

Our next game was more complex, requiring knowledge of famous movies. First, a quote from a movie was read. Then teams worked together to determine the character who made the quote, the name of the movie where it was from and the actor who said it. Our younger children acted as runners, bringing the answers to judges for verification. Prizes were awarded to the top team.

Finally the younger brethren had unstructured games in the gym, while the rest of us fellowshiped or played cards. All in all, it was a very fine evening made possible by so many willing helpers, for which we are very grateful. The result: bonding our church family.

Janet Bratincevic

East Texas Honors Beloved Poet and Composer

The East Texas congregation paid tribute at church services on Dec. 20, 2008, to Alvah Pyle, one of its senior members. Mrs. Pyle turned 95 on Dec. 15 and is the mother of eight children, six of whom are still living. Four of her children, their



Alvah Pyle

mates, and other close family and friends also came to honor Mrs. Pyle.

As a surprise to Mrs. Pyle the congregation sang a hymn she



"Secret pals" Samara and Barbara

for Mrs. Pyle, entitled "Richly Blessed."

After services a reception was held in Mrs. Pyle's honor with snacks and some special desserts prepared by several ladies of the congregation. She was given beautiful roses and a framed copy of the poem written by Mrs. Philp.

Mrs. Pyle has written two books of poetry. Recently, Grandma Pyle visited the East Texas Sabbath school children and gave each child one of her poetry books. She told the children, "I try to speak God's word by the life I live, because I have always heard the life you live is the best sermon you can give."

Mrs. Pyle and her late husband, Norvel, were both baptized in the spring of 1953. She has lived in the Big Sandy area since 1957.

Sarah Baker

Record Number Enriched at Garden Grove Women's Weekend

A record 130 enthusiastic ladies from ages 15 to 86 attended the eighth annual Women's Enrichment Weekend Jan. 16 to 18 at the beautiful Embassy Suites in Santa Ana, California, with the theme "Anchoring Our Lives."

Most of the ladies were from Southern California, but a quarter of the ladies attending hailed from other parts of California, Arizona, Nevada and even Georgia.

After a Friday night's optional dinner and mixer, our weekend started in earnest Sabbath morning with inspiring special music selections, followed by an inspiring sermon, "Our Anchor of Hope," by Mario Seigle.

composed, titled "Hallelujah, Praise God," during the song service.

Mrs. Pyle's biography was read, summarizing her long and profitable life. Then, Mary Beth Philp, a local member who has composed hymns for our current hymnal, read a poem she wrote

After lunch Saturday afternoon, Dianne Clark, an enthusiastic boater, highlighted the theme by bringing an actual anchor and providing analogies of anchoring a boat and anchoring our lives to God, showing how important it is to set our anchors firmly and correctly.

After a break, we enjoyed an audio-visual presentation of "Our Anchor Unites Us" by Merrie Elliott. It was moving to see the common threads with our brethren in Kenya and other parts of East Africa and to learn about their lives and trials.

On Sunday, Jackie Horchak focused on our bonds of friendship with "Does Your Anchor Have a Name?" Deborah Barr of the Los Angeles congregation closed with "The Anchor That Holds."

A wonderful spirit, energy and vibrancy permeated the weekend as the ladies appreciated meeting friends, enjoying meals together, fellowshiping and bonding, learning and laughing (mixed with some tears as well). We understood anchors, with their many lessons and analogies, as never before.

Jean Updegraff

Fourth Annual Dallas Fun Show a Success

On a bright, cheerful Sabbath day, Jan. 31, 2009, in Plano, Texas, approximately 300 members of the Dallas and Sherman congregations

gathered for a afternoon services, a barbecue beef and chicken dinner, and a fun show. The time for the annual Dallas/Sherman winter social had finally arrived!

Before delivering the



Kamryn Weis, Anna Karlik and Stephanie Stogner (photo by Marion Snyder)



Three generations: Christine Collins, Betty Edwards and Pam Hunt (photo by Jean Updegraff)

sermon, Mr. Horchak and the other elders, John Lusk and Ray Wright, pleasantly surprised everyone by ordaining Phil Sandilands as the fourth elder in the congregation.

This event helped to make the members even more buoyant after the sermon as they fellowshiped while waiting for the barbecue to arrive. Each family also brought a tasty side dish and dessert to help round out the meal.

Once nearly everyone was finished, event host Eric Mohr thanked Becky Sweat and her crew for doing such a fine job coordinating the meal service, after which he invited Cliff Demarest to the stage as the evening's master of ceremonies for the two-hour show.

With the help of stage manager Jonathan Fahey, Cliff led the audience through 24 acts that ranged from a 3-year-old boy reciting the 23rd Psalm to a three-woman lip sync performance of Abba's "Super Trouper." Some of the highlights included "Check Mate" (an interview to see how well three husbands knew their wives) and "Blue Man Group Tryouts" (three "volunteers" had to interpret various styles of music while wearing blue face paint).

Eric Mohr

Families for God Welcomes a Record 400

Invite them and they will come! The Twin Cities congregations had the pleasure of welcoming a record attendance of 400 for their 12th Annual Families for God Weekend in Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 20 to 22.

As in past years, the Marriott Minneapolis West served as a wonderful venue for the Friday evening and Saturday events. In addi-



"Abba" takes the stage at Dallas Fun Show



Tryouts for Braveheart or Blue Man Group?

tion, numerous remote guests took advantage of the live webcast and the telephone hookup.

The encouragement of Philipians 4:13 is a pivotal truth to consider as we strive to “build godly character,” which requires us to “do the hard things” in life. This was the focus of the weekend and the featured scripture affirmed, “I can do all things through the Christ who strengthens me.”

David Register, UCG director of Education Programs, kicked off the weekend with a Bible study entitled “Reputation Is the Shadow of Character.” On the Sabbath, he spoke on “How Does God’s Spirit Help Us Do Hard Things?”

Five interactive seminars complemented the rich spiritual meal: “What Do You Believe” (David Witt), “Finances for Young People” (Gary Black), “Woe Dude!” (Steve Myers), “A Woman’s Call to Holiness” (Manya Kalamaha) and “Do the Noble Thing” (Mitch Knapp).

After sundown, a variety show ensured an evening of music, entertainment and fun! At the same time, all the fair ladies and gentlemen of the land, ages 13 to 19, were called to the Renaissance Prom.

The Water Park of America—America’s biggest indoor water park—served as the venue for Sunday’s activities. A fellowship room with direct water park access provided the perfect haven for all nonswimmers.

As this year’s Families for God Weekend drew to a close, planning for next year’s 13th annual weekend had already begun!

David W. Mörker

Arizona Preteens Learn Teamwork and Character at Campout

The Phoenix Northwest and Northern Arizona congregations recently held their annual family campout March 20 to 22. Members parked their campers and pitched their tents at the group campsite at Dead Horse Ranch State Park in Cottonwood, Arizona.

A special preteen camp for the 25 preteens who attended took place again this year. The activities, which included a Bible study, a “people” scavenger hunt, team building and team sports, emphasized building godly character and teamwork.

The Sabbath morning preteen Bible study, given by Scott McKeon and Nathan Ekama, guided the children to understand the responsibility to do what they know is right and to have faith that God will keep His promises.



Campers gear up for team building activities at campout in Arizona



Fair ladies and gentlemen at the Renaissance Prom

Later in the day, the preteens embarked on a scavenger hunt to find specific people. The kids were given clue cards with three unique and interesting facts. Then they had to hunt down the person who matched those facts. Once found, the huntee and kids discussed various aspects of godly character, such as respect, responsibility, service and caring.

On Sunday the preteens practiced teamwork with Michal Lisa Capo and Leah Ferrier by untangling the “human knot.” Afterward, they played team sports coordinated by Miss Capo, Miss Ferrier and Tina Fogelson, including capture the flag.

God provided good weather and safety for those who attended. All of the campers, but especially the preteens, had a wonderful time.

David, one of the campers, summed up the weekend’s activities, “I think the most memorable part of camp was meeting kids that shared the same values as me [and] that are the same rough age as me.”

We are looking forward to next year’s campout for another opportunity to fellowship and enjoy one another’s company.

Jacqueline Ekama

Cincinnati East Teens Serve Senior Citizens

The senior citizens of Cincinnati, Ohio, East A.M. and P.M. congregations were welcomed to a dinner in their honor March 21. Over the course of several work parties earlier in the year the teens of the congregations had created a Bavarian village using refrigerator boxes and a lot of creativity.



Cincinnati East seniors enjoy “Gemütlichkeit”

The theme for the evening was “Gemütlichkeit,” welcoming the nearly 60 seniors to a German beer garden setting.

The main dish, Rinderrouladen, prepared expertly by Blane and Julie Williams, was followed by wonderful desserts baked by 13-year-old Chad Curran. The teens served the dinner in teams

of two, taking care of all their table’s needs.

Mike Bennett

Portland Women’s Weekend Rejuvenates

Women from all over Oregon and Washington arrived at the Canby Grove Conference Center in Oregon March 6 to 9 to learn how to live more abundantly

by “Keeping a Mary Heart in a Martha World.” Natalie Gibbs and Ruby Scruggs organized

a silent auction of handmade crafts, with the proceeds going to the Good Works Program. There was a playful frenzy of bidding as many women vied for their favorite craft item. By the time sunset had arrived, and as auction victors basked in the glow of their new prizes, we all settled into the meeting room overlooking the river.

The Sabbath began with much

with “Keys to a Healthy Heart,” outlining how to set proper priorities.

On Sunday morning Terri Werner led the group in this year’s service project—making health kit bags for people in crisis.

After the flurry of cheerful productivity, we managed to complete 122 health kits and 38 school kits, assembled from leftover items from last year’s service project.

After packing up and offering many hugs and good-byes, we all went our separate ways feeling rejuvenated with good fellowship and food for thought, many counting the days until the retreat next year.

Debbie Werner

“Moral Leadership” Focus at Dallas YA Weekend

Over 90 young men and women traveled from churches across the United States to attend the annual Presidents’ Day weekend Feb. 13 to 15 in Dallas, Texas.

This year’s theme was “Moral Leadership in a Confused World.” Visitors came from as far as Alabama, Arizona, Georgia and even Minnesota this year!

The weekend kicked off with a Friday night mixer. Seminars began on Sabbath morning with a message from Doug Horchak, addressing the “norms” of today’s society and how they contrast with what God expects of His people. Jim Servidio spoke about the value of honesty, how even a white lie could damage our character in the eyes of others. Ken Treybig spoke on greed and money and asked, Where do we draw the line between the positive aspect of getting ahead and the negative of greed?

Later that afternoon Jim Franks gave the sermon, “Doing the Right Thing—Standing Up



Emilie Damour, Becky Horchak and Kristina Bynum at the Dallas YA Weekend



Portland Women’s Weekend opens with a hilarious yet helpful skit



Herr Nathan Creech serves Rinderrouladen

for Righteousness," to the combined congregation.

That evening a costume dinner and dance was held. A Sunday morning brunch with two closing seminars wrapped up another successful weekend. Britton Taylor delivered a message regarding the need for each individual to set personal boundaries. Jim Franks gave the closing message on character—what it is and how necessary it is for God's children to develop it.

Displaying moral leadership is a challenge in today's world. The chance to enjoy a weekend where we are motivated to take on the

challenge and know we are not alone is a valuable opportunity. Thank you to all who participated in making this weekend possible.

Liz Ryan

South Florida Heats Up With Barbecue

The Miami and West Palm Beach, Florida, congregations combined for a day of fun and games on March 1.

Sunshine welcomed us to the Tradewinds Park in Coconut Creek. Activities varied from athletic games

for the young people, card games for the seniors and grooving to disco music for the '70s generation.

A barbecue manned by Mike Moore, Jim Cannon, Jim Haeffele and Richard Rand highlighted the day. Arnold Hampton refereed and blessed the men's efforts on the grill.

Judy Rand



Master chefs Jim Cannon and Mike Moore (photo by Judy Rand)

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

Brit and Julie Railston of the Worcester, Massachusetts, congregation are happy to announce the birth of



Madeline Rose Railston

their second child, Madeline Rose. She was born on July 21, 2008, weighing 8 pounds 13 ounces and measuring 21¾ inches long. Big sister Josie, age 5, is very proud and ready to teach "Little Sis" all she knows. Madeline's grandparents are Errol and Sandra Wade of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Rick and Dorothy Railston of Yakima, Washington; and Annette Gooch of Santa Rosa, California.

Kirk and Jenny Spitzer are happy to announce the birth of their son Levi Cole Spitzer. He was born Sept. 9, 2008. Kirk and Jenny are happy to report that

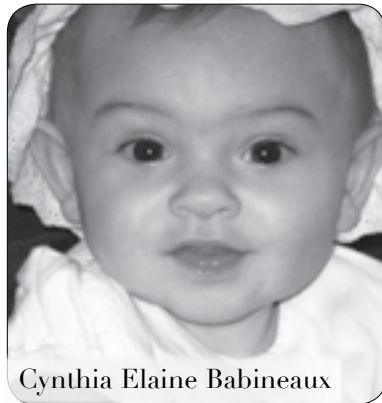


Levi Spitzer with sister Lily

older sister Lily (7) loves her new baby brother and is a wonderful helper. The Spitzers attend the Roanoke, Virginia, congregation with grandparents Jesse and Sarah Earles and numerous aunts and uncles.

Linda Babineaux of the New Orleans, Louisiana, congregation is

happy to announce the birth of her first grandchild, Cynthia Elaine. She



Cynthia Elaine Babineaux

was born on July 18, 2008, Linda and Joe Babineaux's 38th wedding anniversary. What a great gift! She weighed 8 pounds 2 ounces and was 19¾ inches long. We are blessed to have such a happy baby in our lives.

Engagements

Dana Zannetti of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Mitchell Moss of Berne, Indiana,

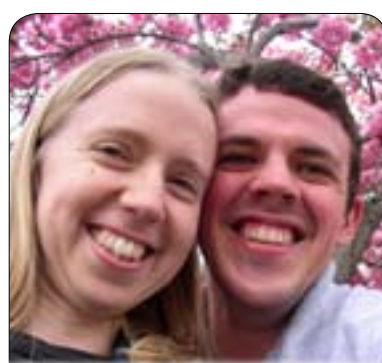


Mitch Moss and Dana Zannetti

are pleased to announce their engagement, which took place at the Feast of Tabernacles 2008 in Antigua, Guatemala. They plan to be married Sept. 6, 2009, in Ohio. The happy couple will reside in Cincinnati, Ohio, for Mitch to attend ABC.

David and Mary Roscoe of Seattle, Washington, and Terry and Cheryl Tootle of Lufkin and Frisco, Texas, respectively, are ecstatic to announce the engagement of their children, Erin Shannon Roscoe and Wesley Taylor Tootle. Taylor is finishing his bachelor's degree in secondary education with a focus in biology as Erin is

completing her master's degree in secondary education and teaching high



Erin Roscoe and Taylor Tootle

school chemistry. They are currently planning a summer wedding in West Portsmouth, Ohio.

Anniversaries

Joe and Diane Hasenoehrl of Culdesac, Idaho, celebrated their 40th



Joe and Diane Hasenoehrl

wedding anniversary on Friday, March 20. The local congregation surprised the couple with cake and punch in their honor after Sabbath services March 21.

Joe, a local elder, and Diane, a deaconess, serve the Lewiston, Idaho, congregation. They were baptized about two hours before Passover service in 1971 and began attending church in Spokane, Washington. They have three sons and four grandchildren.

Joe enjoys stamp collecting, fishing and hunting, while Diane enjoys quilting, embroidery and card making. He has worked 29 years in the Culdesac School District as the transportation and maintenance supervisor. Diane worked 18 years as a school bus driver in the same school district.

Charles (Charlie) and Janet Reed celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on Jan. 25, 2009. The Oakland, California, brethren joined in celebrating with a special cake and refreshments served after Sabbath services.

Mr. and Mrs. Reed were baptized in 1978 and 1980. They are blessed with three children, Mark (daughter-in-law Kathy), Nora and Peggy, as well as four grandchildren and five great-granddaughters.

The Reeds are much-loved members in both the Oakland and Santa Rosa congregations. Charlie leads



Janet and Charles Reed

songs and gives sermonettes in the local church.

Charles and Janie Shannon happily celebrated their 60th anniversary on Feb. 26, 2009. They were married in Chickamauga, Georgia, on Feb. 26, 1949. The Chattanooga, Tennessee,



Janie and Charles Shannon

congregation honored them with a framed picture, a card and a beautiful cake after services on Feb. 28, at the potluck and annual variety show. They are longtime members of the Church and an inspiration to all who know them.

Tom and Roni Weems celebrated their 50th anniversary on Dec. 19,

2008, at a large gathering of family and friends. In attendance were their



Roni and Tom Weems

six children, 12 of their 16 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Tom and Roni were married in Prescott, Arizona. They moved to South Gate, California, in 1961 and were baptized in Pasadena, California, in February 1962. They moved to Oregon in 1969 and now reside in eastern Oregon.

Obituaries

Ruby (Roberts) Allen, 90, died Friday, Jan. 9, 2009. She was born in Lincoln County, Kentucky, on Feb. 3,



Ruby Allen

1918, the daughter of Roy and Rosie Webb Lamb. She was a homemaker and a member of the United Church of God.

She is survived by a son, Glen Roberts; a daughter, Rose Ann Roberts; and two sisters, Iva Mae Clark and Inez Miller. Also surviving are seven grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and 11 great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her first husband, William G. "Bill" Roberts; her second husband, Robert Allen; one brother; and one sister.

Geraldine "Jerry" I. Beyer, 95, died Sunday, March 1, 2009. Born March

30, 1913, Jerry was the daughter of the late Alexander and Mary Parker. She was a member of the Kalamazoo, Michigan, congregation.

At age 17, Jerry ran away to Newport, Kentucky, to marry her husband, Wilmer. They beat the odds and stayed married for 75 years.



Jerry Beyer

Jerry and Wilmer both worked at a mattress factory in Chicago. When they both quit their jobs to move back to their home area, they were unable to find work. They ended up going back to the mattress factory where they were hired back several times. This was during the depression years when jobs were scarce. It was a testament to their character and workmanship that they were rehired several times at the mattress company in Chicago.

Both Wilmer and Jerry managed Beyer's Van Wert Roller Rink from 1960 to 1975. The rink was a gathering place for special events, dance skating and couples skating. Jerry managed the roller rink during the day and Wilmer worked in plant security at night.

She retired from the rink, which she co-owned with her husband. She was a hard worker and took great pride in handling her marriage and managing the roller skating rink with Wilmer.

She is survived by her children, Laron (Marla) Beyer and Sharon (Charlie) Stemen; six grandchildren; and ten great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband in 2005.

Gene Bremer, 69, died July 5, 2008. He was the third of six children born to Herman and Hanna Bremer. He was born on Feb. 16, 1939, and grew up in southern Illinois where his dad farmed 100 acres. Gene remembered helping his dad build their second home on the farm in 1948. All the wood was cut with a handsaw. The only money spent was for windows, which came to a total of \$124.

Gene was of German descent as were many citizens of his community. His great-great-grandfather sailed to America in an apple crate on a large boat when he was about 6 years old.

Gene began reading *The Plain Truth* while serving in the army in Germany. When he returned, he began attending church and was baptized in 1964. Gene raised his three children with the help of his immediate and Church family. He married Dianne (Chandler) Bremer on Nov. 28, 1992.



Gene Bremer

At church he enjoyed songleading, singing and speaking (sermonettes and sermons). He was always willing to serve in any capacity needed and was ordained a deacon while attending the Paducah, Kentucky, congregation. His heart was truly devoted to serving God. He is greatly missed by his wife, children and family. We look forward to seeing him again in God's Kingdom.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his son, Garrett (Mayra) Bremer; two daughters, Theresa (John) McMorris and Corina (Steve) Denny; three stepchildren, Tina (Barry) Smith, Robbie (David) Lantz and Robert Chandler; one brother, Gerald (Debbie) Bremer; three sisters, Gladys (Al) Haase, Geniva (Jeff) Barnes and Annie Bremer; and 16 grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by one brother, Glen (Linda) Bremer and a sister, Eddia (Mike) Parsons.

Louann Filippello of the Wichita, Kansas, congregation died on March 15, 2009, at the age of 79. Mrs. Filippello and her husband, Martin, had



Loanne Filippello

been members of the Church of God for over 35 years. They moved from the Chicago area to Pasadena to be close to the work. Following the death of her husband, she moved from Southern California to Wichita in 1997 to be near her son and grandchildren.

She had been unable to attend Sabbath services for several years due to declining health, but she maintained her faith in the resurrection and purpose of God. Like many older people, she enjoyed retelling stories from the past; and with her lengthy connection with the Church, some stories included a few tales of much younger versions of men who today are faithfully serving in the ministry of Jesus Christ!

She is survived by her son Michael and his wife, Gabriella; grandsons Michael James and Sean Scott; and three great-grandchildren, Tyler James (16), Baylee Brianne (12) and Tristan Jace (7).

Robert "Bob" Huffman, age 64, a member of the Kennewick, Washington, congregation died March 5, 2009, at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston, Oregon. He suffered a massive stroke on Friday, Feb. 27.

He married Linda Selvidge on April 6, 1968, in Long Beach, California. During their nearly 41 years of marriage, they lived in several areas in both Southern and Northern Cali-



Bob Huffman

fornia and chose Hermiston as a place where they could retire a little over a year ago. Both Bob and Linda were baptized in Sacramento, California, in 1972 and have attended services in Sacramento, Norwalk, Garden Grove, Redding and Chico, California, as well as Phoenix, Arizona.

Bob is survived by his wife, Linda, of Hermiston; a sister in San Clemente, California; a brother in Goose Creek, South Carolina; and several nieces and nephews scattered across the country, including Hawaii and active duty in Afghanistan.

His wife wishes to thank all those near and far who have offered prayers and condolences.

Henry P. Hutchinson, 95, died on Thursday, Dec. 25, 2008, in Kalispell, Montana. He was born Oct. 1, 1913, in West Chester, Pennsylvania, to Howard H. and Elsie Hutchinson.

Henry received his education in West Chester. At age 16, he rode the



Henry Hutchinson

rails out West, looking for work. He worked as a ranch hand in Circle, Montana, and was a pioneer in early radio and television repair.

In 1931, on one of his trips back home, he met Hazel Walton. They married in 1935 and celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary in 2006.

In 1940, Henry officially began his career as an appliance repairman and continued to work in the field when the family moved to Kalispell, Montana, in 1965. Henry then began to work at Roy Johnson Repair, retiring in 1986.

Henry, Hazel and their son, Jan, were baptized and became pioneer members of the Kalispell congregation in 1976. The Hutchinsons often hosted the small congregation in their home in the early years of the UCG, helping all attendees become tightly knit together in love.

Henry enjoyed working on and tinkering with older cars. He also loved playing pinochle, fishing and traveling, especially by train.

Henry was preceded in death by Hazel and two brothers. He is survived by son, Jan, one brother, Barnie Hutchinson and wife, Dorothy, and many friends.

Mabel (Couey) Jones was born April 4, 1919, in Butler County, Alabama. She died April 6, 2009, at her



Mabel Jones

son and daughter-in-law's residence in Brandon, Missouri—two days after turning 90—apparently due to a sudden fluid buildup in her lungs.

A member of the Laurel, Missouri, congregation, Mabel first heard Herbert Armstrong on WLAC radio in 1957 after her 14-year-old son had heard him and wanted to order a

Tribute: Joy VanSchuyver



Joy VanSchuyver

Joy VanSchuyver died on Jan. 28, 2009, at her home in Highlands, Texas, after fighting a long battle with cancer. Joy was born on Dec. 12, 1945, in Raleigh, Mississippi, to Tex and Bertha Anderson, and was preceded in death by her parents, brothers Jimmie Lee and Ted Anderson, and husband Ron Howe. She is survived by her brothers John and Fred Anderson; sister Doris Cleveland; husband Jim VanSchuyver; daughter Rhonda (Ron) Smith; son Jon (Liz) Howe; stepson Lance (Karen) VanSchuyver;

stepdaughter Misty (Ethan) Harwell; grandchildren Rashel, Ronnie, Kaitlyn, Ryan, Samantha, Sydney, Courtney, Jessica, Travis, Tori and Chase; great-granddaughter Taressa; and many other relatives and friends.

Joy attended Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Texas, from 1965 to 1968, and married Ron Howe after her junior year. Their life of ministerial service began in Spokane, Washington, then in Canada, and included stints in Edmonton, Alberta; Courtney, British Columbia; and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

They were transferred to the United States in 1981, and served in Pasadena, California; St. Petersburg and Tampa, Florida; San Antonio, Texas; and San Francisco, California. After Ron died in early 1995, Joy remained in the Bay area until December 1998, when she married Jim VanSchuyver and moved to the outskirts of Houston, Texas. Joy and Jim purchased their own business and, once again, she became part of a marriage that exemplified service, kindness and generosity.

When she wasn't busy taking care of and spending time with her family, she enjoyed horses, gardening, camping, scrapbooking and photography. Before her funeral, visitors were asked to depict Joy in one word, and they responded with descriptions such as determined, spirited, feisty, a darling, sunflowers, survivor, wonderful, persistent, firecracker, courageous, inspiring, faithful, smiley, happy, awesome, fun, giving, godly and appropriately, joy. And one more trait almost everyone mentioned—a dotting grandmother. She was certainly a caring woman who loved both her physical and Church families very much.

She loved to help others in any way she could find. She was always there giving 100 percent of her energy to help at weddings, births, showers, funerals, socials, church services, Bible studies and counseling needs of the congregations. Her approach was one of "getting down to brass tacks," sprinkled with lots of common sense.

She believed firmly that God wanted an intensely personal relationship

with us, and she strived to uphold her end. Before her death she often spoke of her belief in God's timing; and although she had regrets about dying before she'd seen and accomplished some things she had hoped to, she was very sure that God would not let her go unless she had run her race to the fullest.

She died just as she lived—with passion, courage and conviction. Passion for everything she put her hands to and for all those in her life—God, family, Church, friends, acquaintances, animals. Courage that kept her strong through some dark valleys and challenges of life and finally through the several-year battle with cancer. Conviction that her God always had her best interests in mind and would take care of her family and friends in her absence, and that He would take care of her from here forward.

Joy had grit (loads of it), wit and practical wisdom. She threw herself passionately into the role of being a minister's wife for many years and always kept the loving and willing heart that helped so many people.

booklet. She was later baptized in 1959 by Roger Foster and Richard Pinelli, while they were on one of the early baptizing tours. Mabel's favorite pastime was reading.

She is survived by her son, Hilford, and his wife, Gennette, who serve as deacon and deaconess in the Laurel congregation, and her daughter, Marie (Nathan) Green, who is a member of the Ocala, Florida, congregation.

Mabel is also survived by one grandson, Richard (Jackie) Jones, and two great-grandchildren, Michael and Holly Michelle Jones. A graveside service was conducted by Andy Burnett, pastor of the Laurel congregation.

A resident of Vancouver, Washington, and native of Texas, Louise Moore, 98, died peacefully in her sleep on Dec. 19, 2008, due to age-related causes.

Louise was born in Vera, Texas, Feb. 14, 1910, to Oscar Hogan and



Louise Moore

Ruth Hogan Williamson. She married Daniel Moore on Feb. 16, 1930. They had three children, Danny, David and Dyanne.

Louise's priority was her family; her second love was sewing. She became a professional seamstress, learning dress design and tailoring techniques.

Tribute: Bob Hedge

William Robert (Bob) Hedge, 60, died at his home in Wickes, Arkansas, on March 9, 2009.

He was born to William Thomas and Addie Doice Kuykendall Hedge on Jan. 15, 1949. He had two brothers and four sisters: Dennis Hedge (who preceded him in death), John Larry Hedge, Sharon Nettles, Marilyn Blair, Patty Goethals and Karen Robbins.

Bob married Deborah Pettit of Hattiesville, Arkansas, on March 15, 2002.

Bob attended school in Wickes, Arkansas. He was the valedictorian of his high school class. He earned a bachelor's degree in theology from Ambassador College in Pasadena, California. He also earned a bachelor's degree in English and German from the University of Alabama, located in Huntsville. Bob spoke fluent German and also spoke several other languages.

Bob was a second-generation Christian. He had heard the truth all

Tribute: Dan Good

Danny Lee Good was born March 30, 1947, in Akron, Ohio, to parents John Good and Alice Good McQuaid. He was the oldest of four children: Johnny, David and Maria Good Jones.

The family began attending the Radio Church of God in 1963. Dan was a teen at the time. The family would gather around the radio every evening and listen to Herbert W. Armstrong. When one program was over, they would switch the station and listen again. They attended their first Feast in Jekyll Island in 1963.

While in high school, Dan soon became known as the Preacher. His favorite booklet was *1975 in Prophecy*. He would show it to his friends and tell them that they needed to change or they would end up like those people in Basil Wolverton's illustrations! His friends told him that he had gotten kind of strange!

Dan volunteered on many work parties for widows and others in need. He also was a member of the



Dan Good

Akron Spokesman's Club. He may have set a record for the number of times he failed his "ice-breaker" speech (four or five times!). But he didn't give up! He did graduate from club and went through it several more times over the years. Jan. 1, 1966, Dan was baptized.

After graduating from high school in 1965, he began his long career in the rubber industry. Then he got his notice from Uncle Sam.

Dan registered as a conscientious objector. He had to have hearings on whether he qualified for that status.

Living in the Big Sandy, Texas, area for 40 years, she became a mom to many young ladies attending Ambassador College during those years, allowing her home to be a social gathering place for students.

Louise was totally involved in her church life. She loved music, eagerly participating in the Festival choir every year. She was part of a traveling singing group that visited nursing homes in the East Texas area. She served in the Church's senior group, Silver Ambassadors and was ordained a deaconess at age 71.

During the last three years of her life, Louise lived in a nursing home. There, she served as president of the residents' council, participated in

sing-alongs and continued to sew for residents and staff.

Left to cherish her memory are Danny and Shirley Moore, David and Noni Moore, Robert and Dyanne Dick; eight grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Louise's devotion to God and zest for life will be missed. She was laid to rest next to her husband, Danny, in Gladewater, Texas.

Virginia Wempfen of the Wichita, Kansas, congregation died on Feb. 10, 2009, at the age of 90. She had been a faithful member of the Church of God for over 20 years and ended her race in this life firm in her faith

and conviction of the coming resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ. Mrs. Wempfen was a native Kansan and set an example of being tough

and persevering in the face of difficulty. In the early 1980s she suffered a brain aneurysm that required surgery. The doctors never expected her to survive.

When she was well into her 80s she suffered a couple of falls that resulted in a broken wrist and ankle. She bounced back stronger than anyone expected each time. At the Feast one year, she fell in the bathroom breaking six ribs and puncturing a lung. After a few days in a local hospital she endured a 12-hour car ride back home without a complaint! Her spunk and enthusiasm will be missed.

Wanda Wilson, a member of the Tulsa, Oklahoma, congregation, died Dec. 18, 2008, in her home after a short illness. She was 78 years old. Her son and daughter-in-law, Dan and Anna Wilson, were at her side.

She was born Wanda Faye Carter on Sept. 15, 1930, in Hastings, Oklahoma, to Dallas and Ophia Carter. She was a homemaker and a longtime member of the Church of God, baptized along with her husband, Gil, in 1970. She had a love for God's way of life and for members of God's Church scattered everywhere.

During her illness, she received many cards from brethren around the

world that were a source of comfort and inspiration to her, and for that she was very grateful. She left this physical life knowing God's Kingdom is

coming, and she now awaits the final trumpet in peaceful sleep.

She married Gilbert W. Wilson on Oct. 19, 1951. They raised their three children in the Bay area of California, Oklahoma and, in later years, Hawkins and Big Sandy, Texas. Wanda and Gil were married just under 26 years before he died in 1977. She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. She also loved to travel, especially by plane, and had a keen interest and love for flowers and country music.

Survivors include daughter Lea Anne (Phil) Edwards; sons David (Ann) Wilson and Dan (Anna) Wilson; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Wanda deeply loved and cared for her family and friends. She will be greatly missed.

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

and persevering in the face of difficulty. In the early 1980s she suffered a brain aneurysm that required surgery. The doctors never expected her to survive.

When she was well into her 80s she suffered a couple of falls that resulted in a broken wrist and ankle. She bounced back stronger than anyone expected each time. At the Feast one year, she fell in the bathroom breaking six ribs and puncturing a lung. After a few days in a local hospital she endured a 12-hour car ride back home without a complaint! Her spunk and enthusiasm will be missed.

Wanda Wilson, a member of the Tulsa, Oklahoma, congregation, died Dec. 18, 2008, in her home after a short illness. She was 78 years old. Her son and daughter-in-law, Dan and Anna Wilson, were at her side.

She was born Wanda Faye Carter on Sept. 15, 1930, in Hastings, Oklahoma, to Dallas and Ophia Carter. She was a homemaker and a longtime member of the Church of God, baptized along with her husband, Gil, in 1970. She had a love for God's way of life and for members of God's Church scattered everywhere.

During her illness, she received many cards from brethren around the

world that were a source of comfort and inspiration to her, and for that she was very grateful. She left this physical life knowing God's Kingdom is

coming, and she now awaits the final trumpet in peaceful sleep.

She married Gilbert W. Wilson on Oct. 19, 1951. They raised their three children in the Bay area of California, Oklahoma and, in later years, Hawkins and Big Sandy, Texas. Wanda and Gil were married just under 26 years before he died in 1977. She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. She also loved to travel, especially by plane, and had a keen interest and love for flowers and country music.

Survivors include daughter Lea Anne (Phil) Edwards; sons David (Ann) Wilson and Dan (Anna) Wilson; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Wanda deeply loved and cared for her family and friends. She will be greatly missed.

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

and persevering in the face of difficulty. In the early 1980s she suffered a brain aneurysm that required surgery. The doctors never expected her to survive.

When she was well into her 80s she suffered a couple of falls that resulted in a broken wrist and ankle. She bounced back stronger than anyone expected each time. At the Feast one year, she fell in the bathroom breaking six ribs and puncturing a lung. After a few days in a local hospital she endured a 12-hour car ride back home without a complaint! Her spunk and enthusiasm will be missed.

Wanda Wilson, a member of the Tulsa, Oklahoma, congregation, died Dec. 18, 2008, in her home after a short illness. She was 78 years old. Her son and daughter-in-law, Dan and Anna Wilson, were at her side.

She was born Wanda Faye Carter on Sept. 15, 1930, in Hastings, Oklahoma, to Dallas and Ophia Carter. She was a homemaker and a longtime member of the Church of God, baptized along with her husband, Gil, in 1970. She had a love for God's way of life and for members of God's Church scattered everywhere.

During her illness, she received many cards from brethren around the

world that were a source of comfort and inspiration to her, and for that she was very grateful. She left this physical life knowing God's Kingdom is

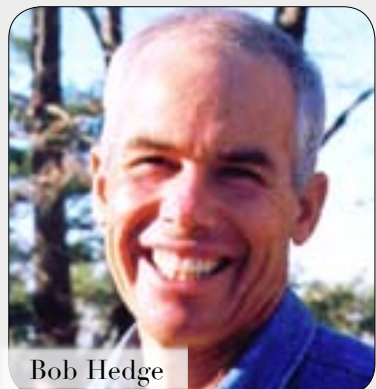
coming, and she now awaits the final trumpet in peaceful sleep.

She married Gilbert W. Wilson on Oct. 19, 1951. They raised their three children in the Bay area of California, Oklahoma and, in later years, Hawkins and Big Sandy, Texas. Wanda and Gil were married just under 26 years before he died in 1977. She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. She also loved to travel, especially by plane, and had a keen interest and love for flowers and country music.

Survivors include daughter Lea Anne (Phil) Edwards; sons David (Ann) Wilson and Dan (Anna) Wilson; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Wanda deeply loved and cared for her family and friends. She will be greatly missed.

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

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



Bob Hedge

A memorial service was held for Bob at the Daniel Cemetery Chapel in Wickes, Arkansas, with Roger West officiating. Bob will always be remembered for his big smile and willing heart to serve. Even on his deathbed, he was anointing others and counseling. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him and loved him.

We eagerly await the resurrection and the time when we will see him again with his arms wide open and a big smile on his face.

his life. His mother requested baptism counseling in 1948. His father was baptized by Herbert Armstrong at the Feast in 1953.

Bob was baptized in January 1967. He served as a ministerial trainee in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, under Jim Friddle and also served as a ministerial trainee under Ozzie Engelbart in Dallas, Texas. He was ordained an elder by Bob Bragg in 1989. He served the congregation in Mena, Arkansas, and spoke at the Holy Days held in Fort Smith, Arkansas. He also spoke at the Feast of Tabernacles in Branson, Missouri.

Bob was a licensed building contractor. He was the fourth generation of carpenters in his family. He did both commercial and residential carpentry.

Bob was on the swim teams of both Ambassador College and the University of Alabama. He was a world-class kayaker. He taught kayaking at Camp Carter in Texas one year. Bob was also an avid gardener, and he enjoyed trout fishing. He loved the outdoors.

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

ABC Continuing Education Seminars Planned for Cincinnati

We are pleased to once again offer a five-day ABC Continuing Education Seminar at the home office from June 8-12. Classes will be held in the ABC lecture hall. Six ABC faculty instructors will cover the following subjects:

- Seven Last Sayings of Jesus.
- Philippians.
- Temperaments and Personality.
- Genesis: In the Beginning...
- The Resurrections.
- Confucianism.
- Greek Educational Tour.
- 2 and 3 John.
- The Early Sabbatarians.
- The 13 Apostles of Relativism.
- Self-Esteem—To Have or Not to Have?

The cost for the seminar will be \$50 for the first person and \$25 for each additional person in the same family. This fee includes lunch each day. If you would like to attend, please send your check to: Ambassador Bible Center, Attn: Continuing Education, P.O. Box 541069, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1069.

If possible, please include an e-mail address so we can send you a confirmation. Space is limited, so please send your reservation as soon as possible.

David Johnson

Mountain Region Women's Weekend, July 31-Aug. 2

The Colorado Front Range congregations are hosting a women's weekend beginning Friday evening, July 31, and ending early to mid-afternoon Sunday, Aug. 2. The location will be in a lodge retreat near beautiful Allenspark, just 15 miles south of Estes Park, Colorado. 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 driving time. The airport is slightly further. The Front Range ladies will do their best to provide transportation to and from the airport for those needing it.

Ladies will be housed at Highland Retreat in spacious rooms holding four twin beds. Handicapped 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



What's New on the Web?

Web Pages for Three Booklets Redesigned

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

- *Jesus Christ: The Real Story.*
- *Is the Bible True?*
- *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy.*



Way messages in an application you can put right on your Windows Vista desktop. You can help by downloading, rating and commenting on the gadgets we create.

Featured Link

You Can Help on members' site members.ucg.org/internet.

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



You Can Help: Sidebar Gadget for Windows Vista

Go to members.ucg.org/internet to learn about the new *Good News* and *This Is the Way* sidebar gadgets. These sidebar gadgets give you direct access to the most current GN articles and *This Is the*

two dinners will be \$125 per person. The first dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Friday. We will save a plate for those who will arrive later. Registration and payment must be received by June 25.

The weekend's theme is "A Woman After God's Own Heart," based on a book of the same title by Elizabeth George. Guest speakers planning to attend include Dee Kilough, Tanya Horchak, Marian Sargent and Clyde Kilough for the sermon at Sabbath services.

Several other speakers will give presentations during the course of the weekend. Some time will also be saved for roundtable discussions. Sabbath services will be held at the lodge, and we will have plenty of time for fellowship and visiting.

For more information and a registration form, visit www.ucg-colorado.org, or contact Beth Bradford at (303) 805-0089 or at beth.bradford@comcast.net. We welcome all ladies and look forward to having you!

Larry and Linda Neff

Wild Game Cookbook Available for Purchase

The UCG Game Cookbook is ready to go to press! Included are recipes for your favorite fish, venison, elk, duck, squab and exotic game meats to tantalize your pallet. The 8-by-11-inch, spiral-bound cookbook will lay flat while you make your favorite recipes.

Each book costs \$18, and all profits will be donated to the Summer Camp Scholarship fund.

Download a request form at www.ucg-colorado.org/cookbook or simply send your name, address, phone number, e-mail address (for shipment confirmation) as well as a check or money order made out to UCG Northern Colorado to Dr. Tammie Pearce, 617 N. 1st St., Johnstown, CO 80534.

If you have questions, e-mail Tammie at capri@mywdo.com.

Larry Neff



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

Focused Education Seminar Weekend in Milwaukee, June 13-14

The Milwaukee, Wisconsin, congregation invites you to join us in welcoming members of the Focused Education Task Force to Milwaukee on June 13-14, 2009.

The event includes Sabbath services and seminars on abuse, sexual addictions and alcoholism, presented by speakers John Cafourek, Melvin Rhodes and Merna Leisure-Eppick.

Come to learn more about the Focused Education Program and take valuable information home with you. It is designed for your own information and to equip you to help others, now and in the future (1 Corinthians 10:13) and is open to all members.

Some lodging with brethren is available, or you can stay in a nearby motel. Please let us know which you prefer. We will provide potluck food service.

If you plan to attend, please respond by June 11. We need a total count of everyone, including those coming with you. Due to the serious nature of the subjects being discussed, we ask that children younger than 16 not attend the seminars. We look forward to sharing this special opportunity with you.

For more information, contact Tony Kuczynski at (262) 363-4260 or at tonykuc@ownmail.net.

Dan Dowd

Calendar of Events

May 13-20: Pastoral Training Program, third session.

May 15-17: Ladies' Educational Weekend, Spokane, Washington, www.womenofvalor.org.

May 24: ABC graduation, home office.

May 31: Pentecost.

June 8-12: ABC Continuing Education Seminar, Cincinnati, Ohio.

June 25-July 2: Camp Pinecrest, Missouri.

June 28-July 5: Camp Woodmen, Alabama.

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

July 5-12: Camp Carter, Texas.

July 5-12: Camp Hye Sierra, California.

July 16-19: Teen and Young Adult Weekend, Orange County, California.

Aug. 2-9: Northwest Camp, Canby, Oregon.

Aug. 9-16: Camp Heritage, Pennsylvania.

Sept. 6: Houston Music Festival, Buchanan Environmental@embarqmail.com.

Attention Graduating Seniors and Parents

Send Us Your Bios!

Congratulations! We would like to feature the 2009 high school graduates in the July *United News*. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions and send a photograph by **June 8, 2009**.

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 8**.

By e-mail to: Elizabeth_Cannon@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!

