

New Beginnings™

UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, *an International Association*

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“And Knowledge Shall Increase”

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by Robert Dick

All of us watch prophecy. We wonder about the times in which we live. Is the end of the age soon, we ask?

One end time prophecy runs through my mind every time I travel to the airport, or pick up a newspaper and read the latest advance in information technology. “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Daniel 12:4).

Anyone who travels by air has to marvel at the mass of people traveling to every corner of the world every day of the week. Travel by air has lost its luster—missed flights, delayed flights, canceled flights, overbooked flights—it’s a way of life. “Many shall run to and fro.”

What about knowledge? IBM announced recently that it had developed technology that would allow the storage of the equivalent of over 1,200 average-length novels on one square inch of hard disk space. My sons entered the computer age less than 20 years ago with a Commodore 64 with 64K of memory. Today’s multimedia personal computers are sold with 32 megabytes of RAM—500 times as much memory. Today’s home computers, commonly advertised in the local computer store flyer, can come with information storage capacities *100,000 times greater* than the lowly Commodore 64! “And knowledge shall increase.”

Daniel’s words didn’t comment on whether this phenomenon was good or bad, only that it would be the state of things at the end time.

Man’s Desire for Knowledge

Man seems to have been created with an indiscriminate desire to know, and then given the challenge by God of channeling that desire as one of the character-building opportunities of life. God placed in the midst of the garden of Eden a tree which would impart knowledge—good *and* evil knowledge. You cannot help but wonder if its placement in the garden was to test man. After all, did not God say, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:16–17)?

Even a warning that eating of the tree would be fatal did not deter Eve, and later Adam, from taking its fruit. Why? Well, as the supermarket tabloid says, “Inquiring minds want to know.” “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food [I cannot help but interject that she was surrounded by trees filled with fruit that was ‘good for food’], that it was pleasant to the eyes, *and a tree desirable to make one wise*, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (Genesis 3:6 emphasis mine). It is interesting to note that God never said the tree would make one wise, only that it was a tree of knowledge of good and evil. There is quite a difference.

Knowledge Not Equal to Wisdom

Solomon observed that an increase of knowledge was synonymous with an increase of sorrow (Ecclesiastes 1:18). I can attest to that as can most of you.

(See “**KNOWLEDGE,**” page 11)

From the President...

The Courage of Our Convictions—Part Two

by David Hulme

In the November 17, 1997, issue I wrote about the courage of our convictions. Included was a letter written by an Anabaptist woman imprisoned in Antwerp as she awaited death by burning for practicing baptism by immersion. She wrote a powerfully moving letter to her newborn child demonstrating her great faith. I asked the question whether there could be any doubt that she had the courage of her convictions, and whether we have suffered anything remotely similar for our convictions. We then looked at several examples of men and women in the Bible who also demonstrated the quality of courage, including Stephen, Abraham, Enoch, Peter, John, Daniel, and the heroes and heroines of Hebrews 11.

The article concluded with Paul's summary statement

from Philippians about the importance of demonstrating the courage of our convictions: "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.

"For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me" (Philippians 1:27-30). Since writing that article based on a short sermon,

I've been asked to continue the theme. What follows is the result of some further study.

Paul's comments above emphasize that suffering is part of the Christian life. It's a privilege that comes with the privilege of being called now. And it demands courage of us. The demonstration of courage is something that we must provide. It's the outward evidence of our belief and conviction. We should ask for God's help and direction in expressing that courage. Courageous action springs from the decisions we make, in connection with God and His way of life. Expressing such courage is an opportunity to consolidate our relationship with our Father.

Joshua's example and God's instructions to him about having courage resonate through the pages of the Bible.

An example that often comes to mind when courage is mentioned is that of Joshua as he became successor to Moses as leader of the Children of Israel. Joshua's example and God's instructions to him about having courage resonate through the pages of the Bible. Let's look in detail at

the record and see what it teaches. "Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, 'Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, He is the one who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.'

"Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, 'Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you'" (Deuteronomy 31:7-8, 23).

This exhortation from Moses was soon repeated three times to Joshua by

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God. The first time that Joshua is commanded to be courageous, the statement is supported by the fact that God has *promised* the land to Israel: “Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them” (Joshua 1:6). Joshua is able to demonstrate courage, *because* God has made a promise.

The second instruction to have courage is based on the strength and support that comes from obedience to the law of God: “Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1: 7–8).

The Law would provide Joshua with the surest of foundations. He would be able to act with confidence, if he would lead Israel according to the Law of God. Joshua was to talk about the Law, think about it and its application, and then act on it.

The third admonition to Joshua about courage referenced the proximity of God. Joshua was to be aware of God’s close presence: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9). This is a repetition of something said earlier: “No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you” (verse 5).

What can we learn from these examples that we can base our courage to act upon? They are: knowing God’s promises, knowing the Law of God and having confidence that God is always there to support His people.

Knowing God’s Promises

Let’s look first at courage based on promises. What are some of the promis-

es that we have? There are various kinds of promises in the Bible. Some are very specific, others are broad and overarching. For example: “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). This is a broad promise of continuous support throughout the Christian life. Then there is a more defined though still broad promise of the future: “Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life” (1 John 2:24–25).

The promise of the future is stated a little differently by the apostle Peter: “Grace and peace be multiplied to you

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They can be relied upon.
They give a basis for
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in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:2–4). These overarching promises refer to God’s continuing help, the assurance of eternal life, and receiving His very nature.

Then there are more specific promises. Here’s one that gets to the specifics of the benefits of right fasting: “But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place;

and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:17–18). There’s the familiar promise about the physical things we need in life: “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:31–33).

King David recognized the truth of these promises centuries earlier, when he said, “I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread” (Psalm 37:25). One more example of the diversity of God’s promises is found in Luke’s gospel: “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38).

God’s promises are sure. They can be relied upon. They give a basis for confidence leading to courageous action.

Being Knowledgeable About the Law of God

The second reason for Joshua to have courage was his knowledge of God’s Law. Joshua was to lead Israel in knowing and understanding the Law. One way to accomplish this was for Joshua to write out the Law for them. He did this in a ceremony after they entered the Promised Land: “And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.

“And afterward he read all the

words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them” (Joshua 8:32–35).

In later years the kings of Israel were to write out the Law for their own understanding: “Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel” (Deuteronomy 17:18–20).

The counterpart to this today was prophesied when God said through Jeremiah, “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jeremiah 31:33). The book of Hebrews confirms that this has happened (see Hebrews 8:10, 10:16).

Put simply, we will be blessed when we follow the commandments of God. This knowledge gives us cause to act with courage on the basis of the Law’s content. How well do we, as the New Testament people of God, know the Law of God?

The importance of knowing the Law is emphasized in the book of James: “So rid yourselves of all vulgarity and obvious evil, and receive meekly the Word implanted in you that can save your lives. Don’t deceive yourselves by only hearing what the Word says, but do it! For whoever hears the Word but doesn’t do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror, who looks at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But if a person looks closely into

the perfect *Torah*, which gives freedom, and continues, becoming not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work it requires, then he will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:21–25 Jewish New Testament).

If you want a revealing look at the impact of knowing the Law, the Psalms provide a wealth of information. David’s appreciation for the Law and its benefits are clearly seen in Psalm 119.

God Is There To Support His People

The third reason for Joshua to have courage was that God was with him, close by, and would not abandon him.

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It is the same for us: “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ [This latter phrase is taken directly from Joshua 1:5.] So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” (Hebrews 13:5–6).

These three aspects of God’s instruction to Joshua give depth to our understanding of the basis for expressing courage. There are other examples in the Bible, and they too relate back to Joshua’s experience, and the message God gave him. For example, when David was passing on the kingdom to Solomon, he gave instructions about building the House of God. His words recalled the instructions given to Joshua: “Now, my son, may the LORD be with you; and may you prosper, and

build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said to you. Only may the LORD give you wisdom and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, that you may keep the law of the LORD your God.

“Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the statutes and judgments with which the LORD charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed” (1Chronicles 22:11–13). The phrase is the same, and in this case similarly connected with keeping the Law of God.

Later in the days of King Hezekiah, the people of Judah were encouraged to show courage in the face of their Assyrian enemies. Again God’s words to Joshua were recalled: “Then he [Hezekiah] set military captains over the people, gathered them together to him in the open square of the city gate, and gave them encouragement, saying, ‘Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him; for there are more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles.’ And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah” (2 Chronicles 32:6–8).

As God had commanded Joshua, so now Hezekiah used the same words to his officers, appealing for courage based on the truth that God was present with them.

The reality of God’s unseen presence had been powerfully displayed to one frightened man over a century earlier: “Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, ‘My camp will be in such and such a place.’ And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, ‘Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there.’ Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them,

‘Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?’

“And one of his servants said, ‘None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.’ So he said, ‘Go and see where he is, that I may send and get him.’ And it was told him, saying, ‘Surely he is in Dothan.’ Therefore he

sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, ‘Alas, my master! What shall we do?’ So he answered, ‘Do not

fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ And Elisha prayed, and said, ‘LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.’ Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (2 Kings 6:8–17).

When we become afraid, and dismayed, could it be that we are forgetting who we are, and therefore, who is with us, close at hand? Do we forget that we have a unique close relationship to call on? “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’” (Romans 8:14–15). Fear and the privilege of calling God by a close family name are at opposite ends of the spectrum. The one precludes the other. The Spirit of God confers boldness, not fear: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

David had to summon his courage based on God’s presence and promises, when fear was present, and needed to

be cast out: “Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; fighting all day he oppresses me. My enemies would hound me all day, for there are many who fight against me, O Most High. Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?” (Psalm 56:1–4).

There are times in everyone’s life when scriptures become much more than words on paper. It’s then that we identify with such timeless words as David’s.

There are times in everyone’s life when scriptures like these become much more than words on paper. It’s then that we identify with David’s timeless words: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me” (Psalm 23:4); “Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He

shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!” (Psalm 27:14).

The Courage of Our Convictions

At the end of his long life, Joshua’s perspective had not changed on what was necessary in the Israelites’ approach to God. What Joshua had been told by God at the beginning of his leadership over Israel, he now shared in his final words. Courage and

obedience to the law were the keys: “Now it came to pass, a long time after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: ‘I am old, advanced in age. You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God is He who has fought for you.

“See, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward. And the LORD your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you. Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left” (Joshua 23:1–6).

Courage was necessary in the possession of the physical Promised Land. God had given the land to Israel, but it could not be taken without exhibiting courage in battle after battle.

The promised land that we seek is also a gift that cannot be possessed without the courage of our convictions. Our actions can become more courageous by a study of the words God spoke to Joshua as He encouraged him in his calling. *NB*

What’s New on the Web?

- January/February *Good News*:
<http://www.ucg.org/html/literat.shtml>
- December Spanish *New Beginnings* “Nuevos Comienzos”:
http://www.ucg.org/html/espa_ol.shtml
- December 15 Council of Elders teleconference:
<http://www.ucg.org/articles/ce971215.html>

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From the Ministry...

Working Together in Preaching the Gospel

by Roger Foster

In the November 1997 issue of *New Beginnings* Mr. Leslie McCullough urged us to recognize the tremendous impact our personal example can have in preaching the gospel. He appealed to us to be the *brightest light* in our neighborhood—to enthusiastically take to heart Jesus' instruction to be the light of the world.

But it is so easy to treat this admonition lightly. Do you personally grasp its importance? Do you truly comprehend just how vital your part in preaching the gospel really is?

The number one desire expressed by the members of the Church at this time is to see more concrete evidence that God is working through us as a body—that the gospel is effectively being preached through our efforts. But unfortunately, we tend to become sidetracked by focusing almost entirely on *what* and *how* we must preach before we adequately focus on the kind of vessels we must be to credibly represent the gospel.

We all know the old saying: What you do speaks so loud I can't hear what you say! Credibility is our first order of business. Our success locally and centrally in preaching the gospel depends upon how effectively we consolidate our personal examples and efforts into a unified endeavor. The work of the Church is merely the combined example and effort of many individuals.

God Working In Us

We are a young and developing work. Our efforts are imperfect. Our resources are small. Our knowledge concerning which programs God will abundantly bless and which ones will prove less productive in our present context is still fragmentary. Any work that we do—individually or collectively—must

have God's blessing to be successful. Surely we all remember that "unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Psalm 127:1). God must be working in us and through us (Philippians 2:13).

To have God's blessing we must love one another, honor one another and work together in a manner that those who see and hear us can say, That is the way people ought to treat one another.

This is no small thing. Paul said that all knowledge, understanding and prophesying (preaching) is *worth nothing* if we fail in love (1 Corinthians 13:2). And Jesus tells us, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Conversely, being poor examples in exhibiting

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respectful, loving behavior will destroy our credibility and render our preaching ineffective.

James puts it this way: "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now

the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:13-18).

Who Will God Bless?

Some have asked: How can we know that God will bless us—and the work we do?

The answer really depends on us! God has called us, given us His Holy Spirit and a wonderful opportunity to work *together*. But it is up to us to learn how to pull together and work as a team with love, respect and honor for all. If we do that, God will bless our efforts. We possess the knowledge. We know what needs to be preached. We just need continuous, miraculous help from God to be effective.

But if we become embroiled in conflicts over *how* we are to work together and fail in being the light this world so desperately needs—fail in being a very different body of people who truly reflect the Spirit of God and the character of Christ in the way we work together and relate to all people in or out of the Church—then God cannot and will not bless us.

Your Part Is Vital!

What is your part in preaching the Gospel? First and foremost it is to be the very best Christian that you can possibly be. Your personal life—your zeal, your respect for others, your willingness to cooperate, your self-control, your heartfelt prayers—is what God is really examining. He blesses the work of His people, His servants. Your first responsibility is to be one of those fully committed servants.

Please don't underestimate this vital dimension of the work of God. The Church can never be stronger than the *individuals* who make it a body. The Scriptures tell us, "The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He

considers all their works” (Psalms 33:13–15). The success of the United Church of God, *an International Association*, in preaching the gospel will always rest upon the foundation of individuals who are united together through Jesus Christ (Romans 6:5; 12:5).

Our number one priority right now is to achieve that unity so God can use us effectively in His service. Paul tells us, “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not ful-

fill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:14–16).

So we can see that a needed part in God’s work is our being a vessel that God can use as a light to those who hear the “good news” that we so much desire to proclaim. God will then abundantly bless our efforts in the manner He sees fit.

David expressed this principle so well. “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a

tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper” (Psalms 1:1–3).

Your personal example is vital to the success of preaching the gospel! Are you deeply committed to doing *your part* with an abiding confidence that it will make a difference in the way God blesses the efforts of His people to finish His work? *NB*

• *Roger Foster is pastor of the Camp Verde, Arizona, congregation of the United Church of God. He is also an editorial reviewer for our publications.*

The following article is reprinted from the November/December 1997 issue of New Beginnings—Australia.

We Are All Leaders

by Bill Eddington

The company I work for is the most valuable company on earth, measured in terms of the total value of its shares on the stock exchanges of the world. It has significant presence in twenty-six major world trade categories, with the objective of being number one or number two in each. If the company, after a reasonable period of time and effort, is unable to reach either of those positions and sees no prospect of doing so, then a decision is made to withdraw and invest its resources of finance and people into another business where it can be the best.

The philosophy of striving to be the best has driven the company from being a good company in the mid-eighties to its preeminent position today, but the principal reason for its rise has been leadership. The term “manager” is not widely used in the company, the preferred term being “leader.” A team-based approach is used to come up with solutions to business challenges, and the leaders of those teams are not necessarily senior people. An employee who comes up with an idea considered worthy of implementation or further investiga-

tion will be the leader of the team chosen to work on the idea, and members of the team may come from positions hierarchically higher or lower than the leader.

Our company’s use of the team-leader concept where leaders are chosen for initiative rather than seniority has produced obvious growth in many individuals and we have seen them marked for greater responsibilities in

As the employee who leads by example is identified by the boss as someone with potential to take on more responsibility, so God the Father and Jesus Christ take note of our example.

the future. After the project is finished the leader generally returns to his or her normal routine, but you can be sure the enthusiasm generated will inspire that person to look for other opportunities, either as a leader or team member. Such individuals have also left an example for others to emulate.

Too often we look upon seniority and leadership as being synonymous

but they are not. One can hold a senior position but still not be an effective leader. Conversely, one can be in a position of little status but provide effective leadership without any of the trappings of power and influence. Timothy, a young, inexperienced minister, was instructed by the Apostle Paul, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Timothy 4:12,16). One doesn’t doubt that Timothy followed that direction and led by example.

For many of us, the opportunity to exercise leadership by right of position or seniority may never come but we each do have the opportunity to lead by example in our families, in our congregations, in the work place and in the community at large. As the employee who leads by example is identified by the boss as someone with potential to take on more responsibility, so God the Father and Jesus Christ take note of our example. We all desire that They are well pleased with what they see in us and that They look forward to giving us more responsibility in the age to come. *NB*

• *Bill Eddington is an elder in the Melbourne East, Victoria, congregation and serves on the Australian National Council.*

United Youth Camps...

U.S. Summer Camp Applications Now Available

It's time to apply for summer camp! Please notice that we have some new locations for your enjoyment! Camp McKenzie is near Eugene, Oregon, and is along the banks of the McKenzie River. Camp Woodmen is in Blountsville, Alabama, by the Warrior River. The other locations are favorites from previous years. Information for camps in Canada and the United Kingdom will be provided in the February issue of *New Beginnings*.

To apply, first select the camp of your choice from the list below. Then write, call, fax or use the Internet to contact the camp director for an application. All camps need older high school and college students as well as adults to help on staff. Serving at camp is an excellent way in which to help build the United Church of God. The impact is immediate and the rewards are great. If you are interested in serving on staff, please contact the camp director for a staff application.

Please note: All applications must be returned by April 30, 1998. Don't delay. Ask for an application right away. *NB*

Challenger Camp Grand Tetons National Park, Wyoming

Dates: Campers arrive Wednesday, July 29 and depart Friday, August 7. Staff arrive Monday, July 27.

Age Range: High school; freshman fall of '98 to graduate spring of '98

Fees: Campers, \$200; high school/graduate workers, \$25; regular adult staff, no charge.

Housing: Tent camping.

Applications: Paul Luecke, Challenger Camp, P.O. Box 7453, Bismarck, ND 58507-7453; telephone (701) 255-0023; fax (701) 255-7239; e-mail Paul_Luecke@ucg.org

Description: The Teton Challenger Camp is designed for teens who are of high school age, have already had camp experience, and want the challenge of a higher degree of difficulty.

This camp is set in the majestic mountains of the Grand Tetons National Park, in northwest Wyoming (Yellowstone National Park adjoins on the north). This area is one of the most spectacular in the nation, drawing campers, hikers and photographers from around the world.

The Challenger Camp is a completely outdoors experience. Sleeping is in tents, cooking and eating are outside, and dipping in a cold lake takes the place of some showers. Note: Due to a number of fac-

tors, *some* of the activities shown below can change; but these activities are all planned at this writing.

Activities include hiking in high mountains, rock climbing, rappelling, a canoe trip and white-water rafting. In lieu of rock climbing and the canoe trip, there will be an optional three-day hike for 20 campers who are interested and who qualify.

Important! Because of the nature of this camp, anyone applying to this camp must be willing to get in good physical condition *before* camp, and follow all camp rules without fail. Activities are at high elevations, and physical conditioning and stamina is a must.

Acceptance is limited to 60 campers. Acceptance criteria will *include*: Age, ability to bring required equipment, physical condition, parents' involvement in the camper's preparation, a personal statement, minister's input, willingness to comply with all camp rules and a desire to give 100 percent effort.

The Challenger Camp is not intended to be "easy"; it is not for those with a low tolerance of endurance or of regimen. It is designed to forge qualities and skills in each teen that are needed for leadership development, relationships, and preparing for the kingdom of God. It is intended to be a life-changing experience.

In addition to needing adult staff, we will take applications for a few high school/graduate workers. These jobs will be in the area of food services and rock climbing, and prior camp experience at the

Teton Challenger Camp is a prerequisite. Tuition will be \$25 for high school/graduate workers. There is no charge for regular adult staff. Arrival for staff is Monday, July 27.

Final note: Anyone interested in applying to the Challenger Camp should begin looking into transportation options *now*. Shuttle service will be provided from the Jackson Hole, Wyoming, airport and bus station. Plane fares tend to be expensive to this airport, but there are some bargains, so start watching for them early. Please, however, do not buy any tickets until confirmation of acceptance.

Camp Heritage Farmington, Pennsylvania

Dates: All arrive Sunday, August 16 and depart Sunday, August 23.

Age Range: Age 11 through senior in high school.

Fees: Campers, \$145; staff, \$25.

Housing: Two-person scout tents.

Applications: Campers and staff may obtain applications through the pastors in the camp region. Additional forms are available from Darris McNeely, 20 South Restin Rd., Greenwood, IN, 46142-8498. Voice (317) 885-8548, fax (317) 885-8550, e-mail dmcn@iquest.net, Web page, <http://www.iquest.net/~ucg>

Description: For the third summer, Heritage Reservation in the mountains of

southwest Pennsylvania will be the location for the United Youth Camp serving the midwest and eastern United States. The Laurel Highlands provide a beautiful setting and many recreational opportunities. Heritage is a 1,200-acre Boy Scout reservation containing three separate scout camps. This facility will provide many outdoor activities that will challenge teens who want a full camp experience within the church.

The dates for this year's camp will be August 16-23. Once again a full range of activities will be offered: swimming, canoeing, riflery, archery, tennis, softball, volleyball and basketball. Christian Living classes will be held each day for all campers. New activities this year will include rock climbing, skeet shooting and a pentathlon challenge where all camps will compete among themselves in a series of events to develop teamwork.

Campers will stay in two-person scout tents which are erected on wooden platforms. Each tent has cots and mattresses. Fully equipped shower houses are near each campsite. Meals will be provided in a modern dining hall.

Camp McKenzie Eugene, Oregon

Dates: Campers arrive Sunday, July 12 and depart Sunday, July 19. Staff arrive Friday, July 10.

Age Range: 5th grade (age 10) through high school graduate (age 18), as of fall 1998. High school workers must be age 16 or older.

Fees: Campers, \$190; high school staff, \$90; adult staff and head counselors, no charge.

Housing: Dormitories.

Applications: Matthew Fenchel, Camp McKenzie 1998, 25045 119th Place S.E., Kent, WA, 98031-6641. Telephone and fax: (253) 630-9606, e-mail Matthew_Fenchel@ucg.org

Description: We are thrilled to be able to offer a new camp facility this year in the Pacific Northwest: Camp McKenzie. This camp is barely two years old, which means the facilities are brand new and perhaps the finest available in the region. The camp is located in a forested area in

the Cascade Mountains, along the McKenzie River. Although the facilities are modern and comfortable, the owners have taken great care to preserve the nature, beauty and rustic setting of this area—truly the best of both worlds!

Originally designed as a sports camp (a.k.a. the U.S. Basketball Academy), Camp McKenzie offers facilities for a full range of summer activities. There are six outdoor basketball courts (two of which will be enclosed), sand volleyball courts, a ropes course, and areas for riflery and archery. White-water rafting is nearby on the McKenzie River. Day and overnight hiking trails are just a short distance from camp. By summer, sports fields (with two baseball diamonds and a soccer field) will be completed, as will a covered swimming pool. Construction will also begin soon on a full gymnasium and ball courts. During free time, badminton, ping-pong and horseshoes may also be available.

The dorms are spacious, very comfortable, with each having its own bathroom facilities. (By the way, the owners are continuing to expand the camp, so there should be no problem with space for years to come.)

The dining area is a large, modern facility which is ideal for indoor activities as well. Each day will once again begin with Christian Living classes, and end with songs, stories and skits around the campfire. We are planning a formal banquet and a lively dance to conclude camp with an enjoyable "last hurrah."

Of course, a successful camp experience means more than enjoying great facilities. It means building great friendships with fellow campers, the staff and our Creator. Camp McKenzie will offer plenty of opportunities—including free time—to do just that. A successful camp experience also provides the means to take home lessons and principles for one to have a successful life. The staff is dedicated to making sure that camp is educational and challenging, as well as being a lot of fun.

In this regard, hardworking and caring staff workers are encouraged to apply. All staff members are asked to be available two full days early (July 10-11) for training and preparation.

Camp McKenzie offers the best of the Pacific Northwest: clear rivers, ever-

green forests, new facilities, challenging activities and a dedicated, friendly staff who promote God's way of life. Don't miss it!

Camp Oakhurst Coarsegold, California

Dates: Campers arrive Sunday June 28 and depart Sunday July 5. Staff same as campers.

Age Range: 5th grade through 1998 high school graduate.

Fees: Campers, \$190; high school staff, \$75; adult staff and counselors, no charge.

Housing: Dorms and tent cabins.

Applications: Bill Bradford, 3145 Kennedy St., Livermore, CA. 94550-2129. Phone (510) 455-4829, fax (510) 371-1453, e-mail Bill_Bradford@ucg.org

Description: Camp Oakhurst is located in central California on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains at Coarsegold, forty miles north of Fresno and about an hour south of Yosemite National Park .

We feature activities such as the high ropes course, the climbing wall, mountain biking and a Yosemite hike. The Yosemite hike is a one-day hike from Glacier Point high above Yosemite valley to the valley below where hikers will see some of the most spectacular scenery in the country. We are planning other challenging outdoor activities as an alternate for those who have already gone on the Yosemite trip. Other activities include swimming, capture the flag, basketball, softball, volleyball and crafts.

Our goal is to help campers see a clearer vision of their calling and future, and establish the values that will assist them to fulfill their purpose in life. Our program is designed to challenge our campers, build unity, teamwork and morale, and instill a sense of success and accomplishment for the camper.

We are able to accommodate the physically challenged in our activities. Please contact the camp director for information about physically challenged campers.

Camp Oakhurst also features RV hookups and campground. Some parents

may want to arrive early to pick up their campers and stay for the July 4 weekend and attend Sabbath services with us.

Pinecrest Camp Fredericktown, Missouri

Dates: All arrive Thursday, June 11 and depart Thursday, June 18. Staff arrive Wednesday, June 10.

Age Range: Age 11 through 18.

Fees: Campers, \$200; staff, \$75; scholarships available for college staff; discounts available for multiple family members (transportation not included in prices).

Housing: Air-conditioned dormitories with ample showers and hot water.

Applications: Pinecrest Summer Camp c/o Larry Greider, 408A Arrowhead Dr., Troy, IL 62294-1913. Phone (618) 667-4722, fax (618) 667-4750, e-mail lwg73@aol.com

Description: For the third year, the lovely Pinecrest Camp, located in the rolling hills and hardwood forests about 80 miles south of St. Louis, Missouri, will host a UCG summer camp. This spacious 270-acre camp offers a large gymnasium, indoor heated pool, sand volleyball courts, rope course, softball and recreation fields, a six-acre lake for swimming, fishing and boating, a nature trail adjacent to Mark Twain National Forest and a full service dining hall.

Highlights of the camp include an overnight river trip and lots of fellowship with teens from across the country. Proficiency awards will challenge those with ability and determination. Also, for those hoping to serve on the UCGIA summer camp staff, a special staff training class is scheduled.

Last year the camp manager of Pinecrest complimented the UCG group for being the best group of young people he had ever seen at a summer camp. This Nazarene-owned camp is offered by invitation only to groups outside their denomination. The UCG was offered two years advance bookings which is rarely offered to an outside group (one staff member didn't think this had ever been done before.)

There are approximately 225 spaces available for campers and staff. Staff workers need a recommendation from

their pastor as well as have specialized training or experience. If you are interested in attending and are at least 11 years old, send your applications in early. There will be staff orientation beginning on Wednesday, June 10. Adults interested in serving on the staff should contact Mr. Greider. Send for a free brochure and application!

Victory Camp Alvin, Texas

Dates: Campers arrive 4–6 p.m. Sunday June 7, and depart 10–11 a.m. Sunday, June 14. Staff arrive Saturday evening, June 6, depart 10–11 a.m. Sunday, June 14.

Age Range: 5th grade through 1998 high school graduates.

Fees: Camper, \$195; high school staff, \$50; adult staff and counselors, no charge.

Housing: New air-conditioned dorms.

Applications: Ken Treybig, Victory Camp, 107 Aberdeen Dr., Slidell, LA 70461-3916. Telephone (504) 643-4437, fax (504) 847-1858, e-mail ken_treybig@ucg.org

Description: Last year was our first time to use the new, first-class facilities at Victory Camp just south of Houston, Texas. This year we want to build on the overwhelming success of last year. As we discussed with last year's campers, we've moved the date up one month to help reduce the effect of summer temperatures a little. We also plan to rework our programming a bit this summer to better utilize the low- and high-ropes challenge course—one of last year's favorite activities that helps build teamwork and personal confidence. Longer class times on that activity should help campers experience a greater number of elements in the high course.

The camp also offers a wide variety of sports, education and fun activities such as basketball, soccer, swimming in a Junior-Olympic-size swimming pool, go-carts, a double water slide, softball, crafts, volleyball, photography and more. Interactive Christian Living classes will be held each morning for all campers and staff.

Staff openings are a bit limited, so adults and high school workers need to

be sure to send in their application early and note any special areas of proficiency.

Camp Woodmen Blountsville, Alabama

Dates: Campers arrive between 4–5 p.m. Sunday, June 28 and depart 10–11 a.m. Sunday, July 5. Staff arrive Saturday evening June 27 and depart 10–11 a.m. Sunday, July 5.

Age Range: 5th grade through 1998 high school graduates.

Fees: Campers, \$150; high school staff, \$50; adult staff and counselors, no charge.

Housing: Air-conditioned dorms.

Applications: David Dobson, Camp Woodmen, 208 Upland Dr., Kingsport, TN 37663-2530. Telephone (423) 239-0501, fax (423) 239-0502, e-mail David_Dobson@ucg.org

Description: We are pleased to announce the opening of a new location to serve as a United Youth Camp in the southeast United States. Camp Woodmen is located in the hills of north Alabama, 60 miles north of Birmingham and 50 miles south of Huntsville. It is easily accessed via I-20, I-59 or I-65. The Birmingham airport is within an hour's drive. Transportation will be provided from the airport to the camp.

All buildings are fully air-conditioned. The camp is located on the Locust Fork of the Warrior River where we plan to offer a canoe trip. Camp Woodmen offers a wide variety of challenging and fun activities. These include a 280-foot water slide, swimming pool, ropes course, canoeing, fishing, Junior Olympic riflery, Junior Olympic archery, softball, soccer, flag football, basketball, volleyball, crafts, nature and environment studies, bonfire, hayride and skeet shooting for the older campers. Christian Living classes will be conducted each morning.

Campers can anticipate a well-structured program that allows not only the opportunity to excel, but also to make life long friendships.

Come and help us make your experience at Camp Woodmen one you will cherish for a lifetime! **NB**

“KNOWLEDGE” (Continued from page 1)

Show me a man who has been in the slaughter of military battle who would not delight in the erasure of that “knowledge” from his mind. I have learned and seen things in my years of pastoral counseling that I would much rather not know. At best they have added sorrow to my life, just as Solomon predicted.

If you follow the course of man’s experience and God’s instruction, you will find that knowledge comes in a poor third place to two *greater* acquisitions—understanding and wisdom (Proverbs 4:5,7; 16:16). All of us have seen someone somewhere that seems to be a walking encyclopedia, yet hasn’t the common sense necessary to live a balanced and productive life, or the skills to get along with people. Raw academic knowledge, apart from understanding or wisdom, is of questionable value.

In studying the Bible I often go to God’s instruction to ancient Israel in their forty year training period in the wilderness. Here God schooled a people who had not been a people in how to become a godly nation, representing Him honorably when they entered the land He was to give them. God’s words to Israel during this time period are often foundational, expressing the spirit or intent of His instruction to man.

Notice the words God inspired Moses to speak to Israel in Deuteronomy 4:5–6: “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’” *The law of God is our wisdom and understanding.* God’s law defines conduct toward God and man, thereby giving instruction on how to use knowledge wisely.

David wrote in Psalm 111:10, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments.” You will notice its praise is not for those who “know” (in the sense we use the term today) His commandments, but those who “do” His commandments.

Knowing the way of God does not impart wisdom; *doing* the way of God imparts wisdom. This is so simple, yet so few grasp it!

What Is the Evidence of True Wisdom?

Knowledge is made evident by the outpouring of information. Watch one of the television quiz shows following the evening news. Here you will see an endless parade of men and women who have knowledge, proven by their quick answers to a wide range of questions.

How is wisdom made evident?

We have seen it once by direct statement (Psalm 111:10) and once by inference (Deuteronomy 4:5–6). We saw that doing the laws of God and liv-

Wisdom is manifest not only in the doing of God’s ways, but in a spirit or attitude of mind.

ing His teachings is wisdom. Have you ever considered that at times knowledge and wisdom actually war against each other? Sometimes a man or woman can be so consumed with their own pride in what they know that they become foolish. Paul spoke to this fact in more than one of his letters (Romans 1:21–22, I Corinthians 1:20–27, 3:18–19).

Wisdom is manifest not only in the doing of God’s ways, but in a spirit or attitude of mind. By the days of Paul, and probably as a result of reading the words of men like Moses and Solomon, those who wished to appear righteous had learned how to ape godly wisdom. Paul spent the better part of his writing to the church at Corinth letting them know he was not coming to them with this spirit of feigned wisdom.

The Wisdom of a Christian

The book of James contains one of the most profound descriptions of wisdom seen in New Testament teaching. It appears at the end of the chapter dealing with the control of the tongue. Through the tongue we transmit knowledge—good and evil, as has happened since the days of our parents Adam and Eve. James observes, “With it [the tongue] we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so” (James 3:9–10).

Following his comments about the tongue, James describes true wisdom: “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom” (James 3:13). Notice that *practice*, not knowledge, is still the true yardstick of godly wisdom.

James contrasts this with the wisdom of carnality, the antithesis of godly wisdom. This mock wisdom is identified by its fruits also, but its fruits stand in stark contrast to those of godly wisdom. “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic” (James 3:14–15).

It is important in all of this to remember that the context of James 3 is rooted in “knowledge.” The chapter begins with a well known verse: “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment” (James 3:1). This chapter is a treatise on imparting knowledge—teaching, talking. It proceeds from identifying the persons (those who wish to impart knowledge, i.e., teachers) to the action (the use of the tongue and the uncontrollability of this disseminator of knowledge). James then moves from those who impart knowledge, and the vehicle by which they impart knowledge, to wisdom. His message is that you may be full of words which display your knowledge, but your manner and conduct will display whether you have true godly wisdom or just an imitation.

(See “KNOWLEDGE,” page 15)

Around The World...

• *The following communique was sent by Edmond Macaraeg to the home office on December 30, 1997. He lives in Davao City, Philippines, with his wife, Lorna.*

Update: Philippines

by Edmond D. Macaraeg

Here is a recent update on our area of the Philippines. We now have six small congregations in this part of Mindanao, having only started our activities for United in this area at Pentecost. They are in the following cities:

In Bunawan, Agusan del Sur, we had our first meeting in November with 19 people in attendance. A few other people we visited later promised to start attending.

In Davao City, which started last August, we also have 19 members, and it occasionally goes well beyond that number.

In Gen. Santos City, South Cotabato, we started with about 19 members including some of us, but there are about that same number in the area itself, with potential for growth.

In Kiara, Don Carlos, Bukidnon, we started with 16 members in November with great potential to increase very rapidly.

In Malinao, Banisilan, North Cotabato, we have four solid families with total attendance of about a dozen.

In Tagum, Davao del Norte, we started with about 40 members including some of us from Davao City, but realisti-

cally, there are about 30 in the area, including children.

Early this month, we visited a former "no-man's-land-rebel-infested-area" region in the southeastern part of central Mindanao (at Telefas, Columbio, South Cotabato), where we have one large family. They invited some friends and a relative to our meeting and we had about 30 in attendance. We started our journey to see them at 3 a.m. from Davao City, and including breakfast and gas stops plus picking up a couple of member families along the way, we arrived about 11 a.m. They were very happy to meet us. We had an informal Bible study with a question and answer session, which helped to strengthen them and hopefully will bear fruit in the future.

Felipe Casing and I serve this area. We try to meet with these groups at least once a month, with some areas seeing us twice a month.

In late November and early December we made a four-day tour to our other scattered members in the northeastern part of Mindanao (Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, and Surigao del Sur). They also were very happy to meet with us and have been strengthened spiritually by the visit. Most of these members, while having been somewhat neglected until recently, have remained steadfast and faithful in the original teachings.

In order to visit one large family, we detoured 18 kilometers (11 miles) from the main, rough highway along the eastern coast, westward inland into the mountains. From there we hiked for about another 3 kilometers (2 miles), since the road is not negotiable by our ordinary 4-wheel-drive vehicle. The fam-

ily were very happy to welcome us. They wanted us to stay at least overnight for more talks and fellowship, but we had other schedules to meet at that time. We promised to come back by April and spend more time with them.

Our plan is to move on to northern Mindanao (Butuan City and Cagayan de Oro City), and then to the western part (Zamboanga provinces) and reach out to many of our brethren who have not yet embraced the "new" teachings.

A few limiting factors at present are finances to carry these visits out and our time for them, since each of us have to also look out for the economic survival of our respective families as we have no other source of income.

The members in our areas are mostly very poor economically but rich in faith and in good attitude. Most of them have barely enough for their large families. Very few are gainfully employed. Mr. Casing and I have voluntarily gone out of our way to shepherd all these previously neglected flock of God. We are happy that UCGIA has welcomed us and is supportive of us and it is into this Church where we are now directing these people for spiritual nourishment.

For now, our main goal is to find all these scattered sheep and bring them into that fold which maintains that familiar voice whom they recognize—that same doctrinal commitment in Christ which they also had at baptism. The next step will be to reach out to others whom God will also call and bring into this fold, and also spiritually feed them.

We hope this gives you some updates on developments in this part of the world. NB

Annual General Meeting of UCG-UK Approves New Board

Sunday, December 28, 1997, saw the completion of the annual general meeting where nominations for a smaller Board of Trustees were presented. The

following board members were approved:

Salaried elders; Messrs. Boraker, Delap (Chairman), Meakin and Tattersall. Non-salaried elders; Messrs. Roberts and Sangha. Laity; Messrs. Betts, Brocklehurst and White.

This reduces the provisional board from its starting point of 17 members in

1997 to the agreed number of nine beginning in 1998. Former trustees from the provisional board and/or others may be co-opted to serve on various committees where need arises. The new board benefits from the considerable work accomplished by the provisional board in 1997.

Dave Magowan

• The following excerpts are taken from a letter sent to David Hulme by G. Sumanth Kumar.

Church Aids Fire Victims in India

Dearly beloved and respected elder David Hulme,

Loving greetings to you. We are prayerfully receiving the video- and audiotapes in good condition. Thank you so much for them. We have all watched the Feast '97 videotape on a rented television. We thank each and every one of those who worked on making the wonderful program.



of Rs. 1,28,000 (one lakh and twenty eight thousand rupees) has been given to 16 families. Also, we have distributed bedspreads, sarees, meal plates, dinner plates, water glasses and rice to them with the help of the remaining amount.

G. Sumanth
Kumar



We have distributed Rs. 8,000 (eight thousand Indian rupees) to each family affected by a summer fire. A total

India: 16 families who lost their homes and possessions in a summer fire (see July 14, 1997, *New Beginnings* pages 1 and 15) receive help from funds donated by UCG members.

Local Church Update...

Youth Weekend, Abingdon, UK

Fifty teens, singles and helpers gathered at Kingfisher Barn, Abingdon, for the Winter Weekend event, December 27 to 29, 1997.

The Barn itself was big enough to hold services and indoor activities, and had its own large and well equipped kitchen facility. Sleeping accommoda-

tion was also on-site with 10 small dorms with showers or bathrooms.

Activities included indoor games, a visit to the local leisure center for badminton, basketball, swimming and five-a-side soccer. On Sunday afternoon the participants split into teams to meet the dual challenges of the Great Donut Crisis and the Great Popcorn Dispute—could they, as representatives of the imaginary nations dependent on these two staple foods, stop the world going to war? Disaster was narrowly averted

and the weekend continued in peace. On Monday morning a shopping trip to nearby Abingdon wrapped the weekend up.

Comments received indicate that the weekend was a much enjoyed success and we have provisionally booked the same facility for the December 1998 national holiday break. With the benefit of lessons learned from this past event, we will plan various improvements for next time.

David Lloyd

Announcements...

Births

Kent and Kristy (Woodbridge) Foraker of Rose Hill, Kansas, happily announce the birth of Kiehn Andrew. He was born June 13, 1997, at 4:25 a.m. weighing 7 pounds 8 ounces and measuring 21 inches long.

Kiehn was welcomed into the family by his brother, Kyle (12), and sister Kara (7), as well as many aunts, uncles and cousins.

His proud grandparents are Ron and Loretta Woodbridge of Wellington, Kansas, and Myrna Foraker of Wichita, Kansas.



Noami Ruth Gibson

Barbara Longworth of Hazard, Kentucky, is pleased to announce the birth of her first granddaughter, Noami Ruth Gibson, on November 5, 1997. She weighed 8 pounds 9 ounces and was 18 inches long. Her parents are Robert and Martha Gibson.

Albert and Mary Beth Guardamagni of Oakland, California, along with their sons Michael and Brandon, are happy to announce the arrival of the newest Guardamagni.

Jordan Juliano was born on October 8, 1997. He weighed 8 pounds 6 ounces and was 21¼ inches long. Proud grandparents are Osvaldo and Natalina

Guardamagni, also of the Oakland congregation.

Bruce and Linda (Lee) Hansen joyfully announce the birth of their daughter, Melody Marie, on December 8, 1997. She weighed 8 pounds 4 ounces and was 21 inches long.

Welcoming her arrival were her brother, Luke (5), and sister, Katrina (2).

Wedding

Amy Seifert and Robert Richey were united in marriage on July 27, 1997. Jim Todd, an elder serving in Elmira, New York, performed the ceremony.

Proud parents are John and Connie Seifert and Barry and Donna Richey. Many family members and friends joined in the happy celebration.

The happy couple now reside in Lancaster, Ohio.



Amy and Robert Richey

50th Anniversaries

Bill and Mary Norrod celebrated their golden anniversary on April 4, 1997, in San Antonio, Texas, with their family. The local congregation also presented them with cake, flowers and



Mary and Bill Norrod

an anniversary clock after services on April 5.

Mr. and Mrs. Norrod were married in Corpus Christi, Texas, 50 years ago. Eventually, they moved to San Antonio, where they began attending God's church in 1959.

Celebrating with them were their children and mates Teeka and Richard Glasgow, Jan (a niece who is like a daughter) and Charles Roemer,

Rebecca Norrod Sagi, Rachel Norrod and Wally Bullard, and Laura and Tim Alcott. Also in attendance were their five grandchildren: Justin and Chelsea Glasgow, Charles Roemer,

Melvin and Shirley Scott of Dickinson, Texas, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 17, 1997, and the congregation held a surprise party for them after services.

The Houston Southeast congregation honored them with flowers, cake and a china-and-gold 50th anniversary commemorative plate. Family and friends who could not attend that date celebrated on November 28 at a party in the home of their son-in-law and daughter, Tony and Susan Scott Smith.

Melvin and Shirley were married in Galveston, Texas on September 17, 1947. They have one daughter and son-



Melvin and Shirley Scott

in-law (mentioned above), two sons, David and Dean, and four grandchildren, James Scott, Timothy Scott Smith, Emily and Matthew Scott.

Mrs. Scott was baptized in 1961 and Mr. Scott in 1964. On February 16,

1980, Mr. Scott was ordained a deacon.

Obituary

Walton Leroy Bogle, 82, of Yuma, Arizona, died November 12 1997. Walton was a member of the United Church of God attending the Yuma congregation. He was baptized April 8, 1988.

He is survived by his son Warren, who attends the Yuma United Church of God congregation; daughters Mabel Ruth Foster, who attends the Yuma United Church of God congregation, and Margaret Henthorn of Phoenix, Arizona.

Also surviving are 16 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Annabell Bogle and son James.

Graveside services were held November 19, 1997.

“KNOWLEDGE” (Continued from page 11)

James saw certain fruits proving the existence of godly wisdom. “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17). Interestingly, Paul saw many of these same fruits as proving the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23).

It is interesting in an end time world where men are running to and fro, and knowledge is expanding at an unbelievable rate, that the true godly wisdom as described by patriarch and apostle is in painfully short supply as evidenced by practice and conduct.

James ended his comments on godly wisdom with the words of the last verse of James 3: “Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” May we demonstrate both godly wisdom and true knowledge by the conduct of our lives. *NB*

Letters From Our Readers...

Comments from the Internet

“Thank you for the literature. It is not easy being a Christian in an Islamic country, not to mention being in a foreign country. May the Lord continue to shower us with His blessings! Have a great day.”

Malaysia

“I want to share the great joy and happiness that is in my heart because God has put me in United. I just want to give you guys a big hug for the wonderful, fantastic, and *magnificent* work that you are doing via *The Good News* and *New Beginnings*. To God be the glory!”

“I want to give you this consolation because I know that many adversities are amidst. Even though I am only one here in Puerto Rico, I pledge my allegiance to the great work of God Almighty that is ever so present. We have the most wonderful calling on earth. I look forward in being a co-worker in this worldwide Work!”

Puerto Rico

“My wife and I have been members of the Worldwide Church of God for almost ten years. We laid low during the breakup period and have been thirsty for God’s Word for some time now.

“After reviewing your Web site, I see that the beliefs that God called us to understand remain preserved in your teachings. If you have anything that can help disoriented members of God’s Church get back on track, I would greatly appreciate it.”

Michigan

“Thank you all for this first step in uniting God’s people. We pray for all of you to be able to know, understand and be able to administer God’s will for all of His sheep. This is not an easy task that all of you have accepted from God. I just wanted you to let you know there are a lot of us who are trying to ‘hold up your hands,’ as it were, for the good of the whole.”

Washington

The Good News

“I welcome the blessing of your regular and enlightened publication.

“It has only been during the last few years I have chosen to learn about God, thus coming to love Him by being obedient to His Word.

“Your *Good News* publication has been a terrific guide for me and those with which I share my life. Your “Profiles of Faith” as well as all of your cover themes have truly given me incentive to study His Word as my faith increases.

“I keep all of your issues and use them to also teach others during my incarceration.

“Upon my release, I shall seek out the United Church of God.”

Ohio

Editor’s Note: The letters in this section may have been edited for length and clarity.

• *This report was sent by David Hulme just before press time.*

Revisiting the Remnant Church of God in Ghana

As was reported in the last member letter, contact was established with some of the leaders of the Remnant Church of God (7th Day) in Ghana during the recent Feast of Tabernacles. On Sunday, January 4, Peter Nathan and I traveled to West Africa to continue the dialog with the ministry of the Church as well as their executive board. We were met on arrival in Accra by our minister, Alan Tattersall, and four members of the UCGIA-Ghana congregation. Alan was in the country as part of his visiting schedule. We got to bed after midnight and left at eight o'clock in the morning on the journey north to Kumasi, a city about three hours by road north west of Accra.

Ghana is a country with great potential. The people are unusually warm and friendly, and the country has made significant progress in recent years under the leadership of President Rawlings. I had the opportunity to watch a parade and address by the leader during our stay and was impressed by his strength of purpose and conviction. He is not a man who is afraid to speak out as he leads his country into the global economy.

Ghana has timber and gold to export to the world, and is beginning to prosper.

When we arrived in Kumasi in Ashante province, we rendezvoused at the appointed place with our smiling hosts and were taken to the University of Science and Technology's Unity Hall, where we held our meetings. Fourteen elders from the Remnant Church of God participated in the afternoon session, during which we explained the UCGIA, and its beliefs, with special reference to the Holy Days.

What exactly is the Remnant Church of God? The man who had originally written to us, Azariah Maxwell Coffie, explained that in August 1994, several branches of the Church of God in Ghana were convinced that they should join together to overcome their differences. Out of six or seven church groupings, four agreed to form a new organization. They considered the name United Church of God, but preferred the Remnant Church of God as more descriptive of their situation.

What do they believe and practice? In our discussions I believe it would be fair to say that Peter, Alan and I were pleasantly surprised by the agreement we found. Perhaps it should not surprise us that their beliefs include baptism by immersion, the laying on of hands, the ordination of deacons, deaconesses, and elders, a correct understanding of the "soul," the preaching of the gospel, the authority

of the Bible, tithing, and care of the needy in the Church.

One of the ministers told us that he had completed the 52-lesson Correspondence Course, and then the 30-lesson course. Some of them have already been observing the Holy Days, and the rest are now convinced that they should teach their brethren to do the same. The contact over the years with the writings of Herbert W. Armstrong caused them to say that they have no problems with any of our doctrines. Further they said that if we could show them from the Bible where they were in error, they would change their practices.

Apparently they had no contact with the local WCG until recently. When they visited with a representative, they discovered that the changes in that church's doctrine precluded them from seeking further contact. When they subsequently came across *The Good News* they recognized the truth and wanted to become associated with us. They told us that whether we accept them immediately or not as members, they all consider themselves as United Church of God! Their congregations are found throughout Ghana, with about 1,000 members in total. Peter Nathan and Alan Tattersall remained in Ghana for a few more days, and will no doubt update us later on their activities. I continued on to South Africa where I am presently visiting the churches and examining the budget needs in this part of the world.

David Hulme