



United Church of God
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May 2002

News At a Glance

First Caribbean Camp Set for August

UCG will hold its first Caribbean Youth Camp Aug. 11 to 18 at the Madge Saunders Retreat and Conference Centre in Jamaica.

Only a few miles from the Ocho Rios Feast site, the Camp Saunders grounds are a short distance from a beach, which will allow campers to enjoy seashore activities. Among this camp's unique features are snorkelling and a climb up the world-famous Dunn's River Falls, a popular feature at recent Feasts. Standard sports such as volleyball, football and basketball will also be included.

Though mainly for the benefit of Caribbean young people from 12 to 18 years old, limited spaces are also available for campers and workers from other regions. Camp tuition is approximately US\$260, with additional charges for transportation to and from the Montego Bay airport.

For more information contact Todd Carey, 6061 Shiloh Place, Mechanicsville, VA 23111 U.S.A.; phone: 804-779-0454; e-mail: todd_carey@ucg.org.

Ministerial Retirements and Transfers Announced

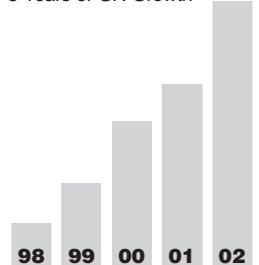
Ministerial Services announced the following retirements and transfers affecting pastors through October 2002.

The following men are retiring: Dean Wilson (spring), John Bald (summer), Richard Duncan (summer), Burk McNair (summer) and Robert Jones

See "News at a Glance," page 2

United Statistics

5 Years of GN Growth



GCE Holds Seventh Annual Meeting

The seventh Annual Meeting of the General Conference of Elders drew 188 elders and 117 wives to Cincinnati, Ohio, for the meetings May 5 and 6. Most of the 305 in attendance were also able to enjoy the dedication of the new home office building May 4. The Sabbath services that day featured sermons by Council members Mario Seiglie and Richard Thompson, which were heard by 722 people in Cincinnati, 133 congregations by phone hookup, not to mention 104 cyberscast connections.

Roy Holladay opened the conference at 9 a.m. May 5 with an encouragement



to the elders and wives to put the knowledge presented during the General Conference of Elders into practice. After a presentation on the Minister-

ial Candidate Program (see article below), Mr. Holladay introduced the seven international reports for this year.

Australia

Bill Eddington is the chairman of the Australian National Council. He pointed out that the Church in Australia is enjoying a certain amount of stability now. A few members left last year, and about 20 from the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship, joined with United. About 500 are now attending United (down from

See "GCE," page 8

New Home Office Dedicated May 4



Singers from Cincinnati area choirs perform at dedication ceremony May 4 (photo by Sonja Kireillis)

After a cool, overcast morning, the sun broke out in time for the 11 a.m. dedication ceremony May 4 in the parking lot of the newly completed home office building. Ambassador Bible Center students and other volunteers set up chairs, served as parking attendants and ushers and served juice and cookies to the guests.

As Les McCullough took the stage to begin the event, a

jet flew overhead, leading Mr. McCullough to joke about a "flyover by United." He also commented on all the nations and people represented at the event, naming countries such as South Africa, the Philippines... "and Texas!" Mr. McCullough called on Don Ward for an invocation.

See "Dedication," page 7

Ministerial Candidate Program Developed

Ken Giese, regional pastor, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the new Ministerial Candidate Program at the GCE meeting May 5. This was an edited version of a presentation Jim Franks gave to the Council of Elders.

Mr. Giese pointed out that times have changed in the Church, creating challenges in providing ministers.

The average age of the ministry is now 58. There are 13 pastors age 65 and over, and one third are 60 and over. With age, the health of the ministry has also deteriorated. So with retirements and deaths, there are more openings than pastors to fill them.

He said some potential candidates will come to the pastor, while the pastor will contact others. Ultimately, he said, we realize that the ministry is a calling, not a choice.

He outlined the steps envisioned for the Ministerial Candidate Program. First is to identify potential candidates (over 30 men have been identified in

See "Candidate," page 19

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Council Members, Chairman Chosen

Jim Franks and Doug Horchak were newly selected to serve on the Council of Elders for three-year terms May 5. Although they are new members in that they weren't current Council



Jim Franks



Doug Horchak

members, they both have served on the Council in the past.

John Jewell

(international representative) and Aaron Dean were returned to the Council.

As Roy Holladay assumed the office of president, he chose not to stand for reelection to the Council and asked to be replaced as chairman of the Council.

At the Council of Elders meeting May 7, Clyde Kilough was selected to serve as chairman through the end of June. A ballot for chairman for the next term was scheduled for May 9 at the end of the Council meetings



Aaron Dean

(after the press deadline).

Don Ward was not returned to the Council.

Jim Franks and his wife, Sharron, pastor the Houston North, Texas, congregation, and he has chaired the Doctrine Subcommittee. Doug Horchak and his wife, Tanya, pastor the Dallas and Sherman, Texas, congregations, and he chairs the Youth Education Committee. Both men have served on the Ministerial Services team.

Details of the meetings can be found at www.ucg.org/a/council/council.htm. UN

News At a Glance

Continued from page 1

(fall). Otto Lochner is leaving the full-time ministry and will become a non-salaried elder.

This spring Roy Holladay transferred to the home office to become president and Don Waterhouse is transferring to serve the Columbia and Florence, South Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia, congregations.

Also this spring there are two circuit changes in Florida, with David Treybig adding Tampa to his circuit, and Richard Rand pastoring the Ft. Myers congregation, while continuing as associate pastor of Miami and West Palm Beach.

The following men are scheduled to transfer this summer to help fill in the holes left by retirements and transfers:

Ken Treybig to the Big Sandy and Texarkana, Texas, congregations.

John Cafourek to Salem, Oregon.
Rex Sexton to Olympia and Tacoma, Washington.

Richard Thompson to Orlando and Ocala, Florida, and adding Jacksonville in the fall.

Eric Evans to Atlanta and Jefferson, Georgia.

Jack Hendren to Corpus Christi, Victoria and Harlingen, Texas.

Bill Jahns to South Africa.

Larry Salyer to Salt Lake City, Utah; Grand Junction, Colorado; and Twin Falls, Idaho.

Greg Sargent is moving to Kansas City, Missouri, and will still serve the St. Louis and Columbia, Missouri, congregations.

E-Learning Version of Bible Study Course Nearing Completion

A team of about 15 volunteers across the United States and Canada have been working on a project to convert the *Bible Study Course* into a Web-based



E-learning version of lesson 1

e-learning course. All 12 lessons have been converted with text, scriptural reference links and additional resource links, and should be ready to roll out this month.

Each lesson has been split into five sections or modules. After each module users complete a short five-question quiz before advancing to the next module.

Dan Deininger

See "News at a Glance," page 16

Youth Education Team Meets in St. Louis

by David Treybig

Members of the Youth Education Team and their wives assembled March 3 to 5, in St. Louis, Missouri, to review and plan programs for youth for the coming year. Those present were Doug and Tanya Horchak, Larry and Bonnie Greider, Joel Meeker, Jim and Judy Servidio, David and Teddi Treybig.

Doug Horchak, team chairman, opened the meetings Sunday afternoon at the home of Larry and Bonnie Greider with an overview of the agenda and the proposed 2002-2003 budget.

Preteen Education

Jim and Judy Servidio led a discussion of the Sabbath school, Fall Festival booklets and Festival Youth Instruction programs. Jim reported that Becky Bennett had completed editing 80 percent of the Sabbath school teachers' outlines. Since that time all 240 of the lessons have been edited and have been posted at www.ucgyouth.org/resources/ssl/.

After viewing another denomination's training video for Sunday school teachers, the committee discussed the possibility of producing annual training videos for our Sabbath school teachers. One suggestion was to seek the input of professional educators in UCG in determining what material should be covered in such videos.

Regarding Festival Youth Instruction, the group brainstormed ways to get a more accurate projection of the number of youth that will attend the classes during the Feast of Tabernacles. One suggestion that seemed to have merit is to take a poll of parents who have youth in existing Sabbath schools to determine which Feast sites they will attend. A closely related item concerned what to do for children in grade six since this age group does not currently have Festival Youth Instruction and they are not old enough to attend teen Bible studies. The recommendation was made that a new class level of instruction be prepared for this age group.

The discussion then moved to last year's Festival activity booklets. Sug-

gestions for improvement included relabeling the lessons according to grade levels, inserting a fictional Feast story in the lessons for younger children, including some journaling aspects into the lessons and mailing the booklets earlier so children will receive them one week before the Feast of Trumpets.

United Youth Camps

The last item discussed on Sunday afternoon was United Youth Camps. The overall camp coordinator, Larry Greider, presented an overview of this program. Last year, 820 kids attended UCG camps and the projection is that 860 will attend this coming year. With American Camping Association (ACA) accreditation, our camps have attained and are maintaining high standards of operation. Our next accreditation visit will be in the summer of 2003.

One area of concern that was discussed related to preteen camps. Through our experience with the ACA for United Youth Camps, we have identified many areas of potential liability and taken appropriate measures to protect the Church. Similar liabilities exist for our preteen camps and standards of operation need to be established for these programs as well. (See page 21 for information on 2002 preteen camps.)

United Youth Corps

Monday morning the meetings continued in the home of George and Karen Meeker. The meetings began with a PowerPoint presentation by Joel Meeker on Youth Corps projects. His report included photos of projects from the past two years, as well as an overview of this year's projects in the Philippines, Ghana and South Africa.

A possibility for a future project lies in a developing relationship with previous contacts in China. Two years ago, Victor Kubik and Larry Greider traveled there to visit with individuals who wanted to meet people carrying on the work of Herbert Armstrong. In the next few months, Larry Greider and Joel Meeker will make another visit to China to further this relationship.

One concern regarding the Youth

Corps is the continuity of this valuable program. The first year, 17 young people participated in the various projects. Last year only four young adults served on these projects. Suggestions for insuring that these programs continue included the possibility of inviting ABC graduates to participate, providing subsidies for travel and connecting them in a more holistic manner with the overall work of the Church.

Young Adults' Concerns

After a lunch break, the group reconvened and Doug Horchak led a discussion of concerns of young adults. Some have expressed concern about the styles of some sermons and desire more practical explanations on how to apply biblical principles. Young people also want opportunities to serve and be an active part of the Church.

A summary of survey results of young adults' impressions of last year's Festival Bible study, titled "Sex in the World Tomorrow," revealed that this subject was widely appreciated. Many wished there would have been more time for discussion. The same survey revealed that young adults, in general, believe these kinds of Festival studies are very important for their spiritual education. Many also expressed appreciation for the use of PowerPoint presentations and the opportunities for group discussions. Young adult weekends are designed to complement these Festival studies throughout the year.

Teen Bible Study Guides and Youth United

Next, Larry Greider gave a report on Teen Bible Study guides. Two new topics to be written include Bible study and environmentalism.

David Treybig then gave an update on *Youth United* e-magazine. Six issues have been produced and the production process is well established. Five additional reviewers were added to the current review staff—the Youth Education Team. Those added are James Capo, Todd Carey, Eric Evans, Paul Luecke and Ken Treybig.

A survey taken last summer revealed



Youth Education Team meets in St. Louis to discuss future plans

that only 15 percent of youth attending United Youth Camps have seen *Youth United* e-magazine. In essence, we realize that we are not delivering our product to our target audience. As a result of this information, the suggestion was made to begin printing the e-magazine, in addition to having it available on the Internet.

Parenting Video

The next subject focused on developing a video that would encourage and instruct parents on teaching their children from God's Word. Doug Horchak chaired the discussion that began with a review of a suggested presentation. The reality is that many parents are in need of encouragement to fulfill this biblical mandate and would like to have more instruction on how to do so.

Doug Horchak concluded the day with a report on the [ucgyouth.org](http://www.ucgyouth.org) Web site and with an overview of the young adults' weekend in Dallas, Texas.

On Tuesday morning, the team continued discussion of a parenting video. Suggestions included focusing on the Bible as the authoritative foundation for determining our values and conduct, various styles of teaching, age-appropriate approaches, discussions of current events in conjunction with biblical principles and the inclusion of single parents as well as traditional couples in modeling these concepts.

The purpose of this video is to encourage parents to teach their children God's way of life as revealed in His Bible by demonstrating a variety of approaches to aid in accomplishing this vital parental responsibility. **UN**

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New President Discusses Background, Plans and Goals

■ After a year-long executive search and transition process, Roy Holladay became president of United Church of God, an International Association May 7. Following is an interview with Mr. Holladay conducted by Scott Ashley, *Good News* managing editor, in April.

Interview by Scott Ashley

Scott Ashley: Let's begin by talking about some of your background in United. What roles and responsibilities have you had in United since we began?

Roy Holladay: I was one of the members of the transitional board [chosen at the early 1995 Indianapolis conference], then on the Council of Elders from December 1995 forward. Early on I was selected to be on the Strategic Planning Committee, which I chaired

My focus will be on preparing the Church for the return of Christ, developing unity within the Church and carrying out the mission statement we've been given.

until I became chairman of the Council.

I was also in charge of the Home Office Location Committee, and then, once the location was settled upon, our committee had to choose and find the location of the home office building and take care of this type of thing.

The last two years I've been serving as chairman of the Council. Also, for about three years I served as regional pastor in United, pastoring three churches in Florida—Fort Myers, West Palm Beach and Miami. More recently I've been pastoring two churches, East Texas [centered in Big Sandy] and Texarkana.

As a member and chairman of the Council of Elders, you've emphasized the concept of Christ-centered servant leadership as the theme of the ministerial conferences in 2000 and 2001 and the most recent ministerial regional conferences. What's your motivation and thinking behind that emphasis?

Servant leadership is fundamental to our spiritual development as a church. It was a major emphasis in Christ's ministry and instruction to His disciples. It is fundamental to understanding the mind of Christ. I just gave a sermon on the mind of Christ and one of the points I mentioned is the fact that Jesus Christ's emphasis was simply on service. He said He came not to be served, but to serve.

One of the reasons for emphasizing this is to help us realize we must all be on a course for understanding and applying the mind of Christ. That's a lifelong quest; it's not something you accomplish overnight. Do any of us tru-

ly implement the servant leadership style of Christ completely? Certainly not. It's something we all have to work on.

The concept of servant leadership touches every area of our lives. It involves the ministry and their leadership, administrators and their leadership, it involves husbands, wives, mothers, siblings, bosses, department heads, deacons, camp counselors, project coordinators—it involves any area where we are serving.

Basically what we're talking about is growing to the stature and the measure of the fullness of Jesus Christ. We quote the scripture that God is love. We can also say that *God is a servant*. Who is the *greatest* servant in the universe? It's the Father and Christ. So you and I, if we're going to become like them, will have to have an approach of servant leadership. As we progress into the future, developing future generations and a future ministry, we will be much more effective if this becomes the basis of our approach.

You've announced that you're stepping down from the Council

after you assume the office of president. What's your thinking and the reason behind that decision?

I believe that, for me, I need to devote all of my attention to the responsibility



of the president. To try to do both jobs justice, I would be divided. As chairman of the Council and a Council member, and in trying to do the job of a regional pastor and pastor, I've found that I've been pulled in different directions. For me, I've found that it's better that I don't wear too many hats at one time.

I also think it provides a clear distinction of duties and responsibilities. The Council has oversight of the pres-



Roy and Norma Holladay

ident and the administration, and therefore I think this arrangement will allow me to concentrate more on the administration. We'll certainly work closely together. I think it also allows the Council an opportunity, any time they need to discuss the president or administrative matters, to have me just step out of the room and then have the full Council involved in a discussion without me being there. Sometimes that produces an awkward situation.

What will be your focus as you assume the office of president?

One of the major focuses will be concentrating on the Church as a

We have a mission statement to preach the gospel, make disciples and care for those disciples. That's biblically based and should be the driving force behind what we do. My focus will be on preparing the Church for the return of Christ, developing unity within the Church and carrying out the mission statement we've been given.

What have you learned over nearly 40 years as a pastor that will help you most as president?

Hopefully what I've learned has been having the heart of a pastor and

Over the years I've learned that working together and giving others responsibilities helps them develop their talents and abilities. I want to have a shepherd's heart, a pastor's heart, to be able to love God's people and serve them.

shepherd, and loving God's people. One of the things I've learned is that God has added to the Church as He pleases, and He gives us a responsibility to care for, serve, love and look after those people. I feel strongly that the president and administrative staff are there to serve the Church.

Over the years I've learned that working together and giving others responsibilities helps them develop their talents and abilities. I want to have a shepherd's heart, a pastor's heart, to be able to love God's people and serve them.

How do you see your relationship as president with the various international areas?

The primary responsibility of the president is with U.S. administration, and to support international areas as the Council may direct me.

I feel strongly this is the United Church of God, an *International Association*. When that name was chosen, it was chosen because we realized it wasn't going to be only a U.S. work. It would be an association of national councils that would be working together.

I think we have an international work

to do and the U.S. administration and president are here to support and serve in that. I'm going to try to see what the needs are. Every budget includes general subsidies that go out to a number of the international areas, so the better acquainted I am with their needs, the better I can make recommendations to the Council regarding what those needs are and help bring forth a budget to assist them.

Even though I haven't served overseas as much as some of the other men have, Norma and I have traveled to South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and England and have been able to meet with a number of the brethren. We're looking forward to serving them, to assess from them what their needs are so we can help them.

What do you see as the strengths of the United Church of God?

One of our strengths is our doctrinal integrity and process. Also the fact that we provide pastors to look after local congregations and to serve and help them. We are united doctrinally. We have a strong emphasis on preaching the gospel to the world. We are strongly united in those purposes.

The United Church of God has existed for just over seven years now. What would you like to see the United Church of God be doing, practicing and look like seven years from now?

One of the most important things for

us is how well we're fulfilling the mission of the Church that God has given us. We have to be constantly evaluating how well we're doing this and how we can improve. I think we'd all like to see us more effectively preach the gospel, make disciples and care for those disciples.

I think the president has to focus on the overall big picture. I'd like to see us even more united. That's not a condemnation that we're not united now, but obviously we can become even more united, more focused. We need to become more focused—the ministry, the membership, the entire Church—on the calling God has given us and preparing ourselves for the Kingdom of God and to preach the gospel to the world.

I'd like to see us have a more Christ-centered servant leadership at all levels of the Church. I'd like to see us be a *growing* church. We hope that God will continue to bless us, spiritually and numerically.

We're beginning to implement a new process for training new leaders at all levels of leadership throughout the Church. I'd like to see us growing in all those areas so that seven years from now not only will we have a stronger ministry, but we'll have new ministers

who've been brought on-line who all believe in service and looking after God's people. I'd like to see that approach at every level.

Leadership isn't just something the ministry exercises. Service is something that *all* of us have to learn. We're all being prepared to be rulers in the Kingdom.

What are the major issues or challenges the United Church of God will face in the next five to 10 years?

We are a spiritual organism, so obvi-

Everything we do, whether locally or centrally, must be filtered through our mission statement. If it doesn't fit within the mission God has given us, then we shouldn't be doing it.... Some things can be done very effectively on the local level and others are done more effectively centrally.

ously the greatest threats are those that are spiritual. Satan is the unseen enemy that never gives up. He will continue to attack us. I think he will especially come after United because if God continues to bless us, Satan will see us as one of his major threats.

Satan doesn't want to see the gospel proclaimed; he doesn't want to see people given hope; he doesn't want to see people converted and baptized. So as time goes on I think he will try to attack us, to destroy us, to undermine us. We'll have to constantly be aware of that and vigilant against his attacks.

Another of the major challenges is to keep the Church—the ministry and the membership—growing spiritually, to inspire them and mentally challenge them. Again, that's not implying that we're not growing or we're not mature, but we have to *constantly* spiritually mature. The Bible uses the analogy that we're the children of God and we have to become perfect. In the Bible the word *perfect* means "to mature." For us to mature and become like Jesus Christ is a process that continues until the day we die.

Another challenge is the aging ministry. We must be teaching and grooming a stream of ministers. We must also be doing the same thing in teaching the next generation. There has to be an emphasis on that because not only do we have an aging ministry, but we have an aging membership. We need to bring along the next generation of children and young people. They are our primary resources.

I think we also have to be preparing for future growth. We have to control our growth to fit within our resources. We need to be searching for new and better ways to do what we're supposed to be doing.

If God grants us more time to go on, the Bible indicates that we will be faced with complacency, being comfortable and possibly filled with lethargy. So we face the challenge of how do we continue to keep people committed, inspired and encouraged? How do we stimulate growth and give a clear vision to the membership and the ministry so we stay fired up with a burning desire to finish the work God has given us?

A challenge in the future could be the financial situation. None of us knows how the economy will go. Right now

we're blessed, but what if the economy collapses? Also, our members are growing older and retiring. Unless God begins to replace those, our income is going to decline. We face a challenge in how we handle those situations.

Sharpening our focus for the work God has given us, our ability to reach various age groups and work with them, and our ability to utilize the various instruments God has given us for preaching the gospel are all important.

We have a multifaceted approach of preaching the gospel. Not only do we

have TV, radio and the printed word, we now have the Internet. There may be other ways that open up in the future that we're not even aware of now. We haven't put our eggs in one basket.

We're trying to use an approach that will reach out and touch as many lives as possible. We know that not everybody listens to radio, watches TV, reads or is on the Internet. But when we're using all of these, we begin to affect and reach a larger number of people. As God opens those doors we need to be aware of them and walk through them.

You were part of the UCG/CGCF task force that eventually led to the merger of the two groups. Do you foresee any similar developments with other groups, large or small, in the future?

I would certainly hope so. You'd always want to see movement towards unity of God's people. However, I think



Roy Holladay and Mario Seiglie listen at Council of Elders meeting

the big issue is *unity*, not merger. Mergers can only come out of unity. That begins in the way that people think as individuals and organizations.

When you look at the scattering that's out there, I think we all pray daily that God would bring us back together. We can do our part by being open. United has been that way from the beginning. We've said that we're willing to have anyone attend our services and Feast sites as long as they're willing to meet with us in peace. We don't put other restrictions on them. Yet we realize that unless two walk together

and agree, we're not going to go in the same direction.

I think we all pray for unity, yet we realize this is something that God's going to have to work out. It's not something that's going to come about just because of our own human effort. We certainly should be open and receptive, but I think God is going to have to bring about getting more of us together.

One of the budget items discussed by the Council and included in the budget this year is assistance for lease or purchase of local church buildings in some areas that meet appropriate criteria. What are your thoughts on that subject?

The job of the president and the administration is to carry out the policies and directives of the Council. The Council has established a building policy and has indicated that they would like to see a limited amount of funds in the budget to be able to jump-start a few buildings, possibly one or two a year. My job as president will be to carry out the Council's directives and policies.

On a personal level, I feel that having buildings in some areas will be very helpful and encouraging to the brethren. As an example, Houston built a building where they had a great need because they were being bumped from their hall so often. In the Big Sandy area we're pursuing that presently. This year we will be bumped from our hall about 23 or 24 times. We're looking at having a facility where we can have some stability and be a service to the neighborhood.

What are your thoughts about such local-involvement projects as cable-access TV and humanitarian projects?

Everything we do, whether locally or centrally, must be filtered through our mission statement. If it doesn't fit within the mission God has given us, then we shouldn't be doing it.

United started with the idea that local areas would have a more direct involvement, and the Council from its inception has tried to support that. In talking with Peter Eddington the other day regarding media operations, he mentioned that since he's been the operational manager over that area, he's tried to give his advice on any suggestion that's come from a local church area. Some things have been tried and haven't been successful. But if they've wanted to try it, he's never said no; he's always given his support. So the administration has been supportive of those types of things.

Some things can be done very effectively on the local level and others are done more effectively centrally. Printing a magazine and sending it out is done much more effectively on a central level as opposed to a local level. We want to see all God's people use their abilities and talents effectively and to develop them. The administration is here to help support that.

Obviously any local initiatives need to be evaluated because many things have been tried in the past that haven't worked. One of the things Peter has done, and the Council has been appre-

ciative of, is that if something has worked well, he tries to pass that on to other church areas so they can take advantage of it. Basically what we're saying is that we're all working together.

What are you most looking forward to as president?

I would say having a greater opportunity to serve the Church, to work with God's people and to be directly involved in the preaching of the gospel. On the Council you're one out of 12



Matthew Fenchel, Peter Eddington, Roy Holladay and Dave Evans in the new home office conference room making plans for the dedication

setting policy and giving direction, but the administration and the president have the opportunity to implement those things and move them forward. I'm really looking forward to doing that and helping to make that happen.

I'll also have the opportunity, since I'll no longer be pastoring on a local level, to get out to local congregations more. For my wife and me, our first love is pastoring God's people. I look on the job of the president as helping to get out and serve the churches and get more acquainted. We're going to try to get out as often as possible to get the pulse and feelings of the people. I'm also looking forward to working closely with the ministry and developing a working relationship there.

What do you think will be your greatest challenge as president?

That's a difficult question because situations change as time goes along. Right now I'm looking at the fact that we have an aging ministry and membership. One of our biggest challenges is being able to bring along new ministers. But as always, a challenge is to preserve the unity within the Church, to continue to have a church that's

we preaching the gospel and why is God calling people today? We're being called to become kings and priests and rulers, to assist Jesus Christ as the Bride of Christ. If we're going to be assisting Him, we're going to be servants, following His lead and direction. We've got to be prepared and stay focused on that.

One of the hardest things for all of us, and I include myself, is to stay focused on that calling and to remind ourselves constantly of why God has called us, what we're being prepared to

do. We're being prepared to help all humanity have an opportunity to be in God's Kingdom and to be of service to them. That's always been one of the main challenges—to not lose that focus of why we've been called, especially when you read in the Scriptures that in the end time lethargy is going to be a problem.

Is there anything else you'd like to say or add that we haven't covered?

After having served on the Council and as chairman of the Council, [I realize the importance of being] extremely supportive of the Council, realizing that they're the governing body. They're the ones who set the policy and give the direction, and as president I'm there to make sure those are carried out. I'll work with the operation managers to carry them out and report back to the Council on how effectively they're being done so that we're all working together.

I look on the job of the president as helping to assist the Council and serving the membership. My basic responsibility is to oversee the home office operation and to serve the churches in the United States and to interface with

I look on the job of the president as helping to assist the Council and serving the membership. My basic responsibility is to oversee the home office operation and to serve the churches in the United States and to interface with the international areas as the Council sees fit and as they desire. We're here to serve...

growing and maturing, and in essence to prepare the Bride so she's ready for Christ when He returns.

We know that we have a challenge of preaching the gospel, but why are

the international areas as the Council sees fit and as they desire. We're here to serve, and any ways I can expedite that and make it work more effectively, I'll be doing so. **UN**

Les and Marion McCullough's Legacy

■ These major accomplishments during Mr. McCullough's tenure as president of UCGIA highlight Mr. and Mrs. McCullough's leadership, service and example.

by Tom Kirkpatrick

Les McCullough was appointed president of the United Church of God, an International Association, in the spring of 1998, at a time of crisis in the Church. Without recounting all the difficulties of those days, suffice it to say that the Church was then experiencing great upset, instability and loss of membership, to the point that its organizational and financial viability and the ability to carry out its mission were in real question.

As he leaves office in the spring of 2002, there is much greater stability in UCGIA than four years before, and the Church is fulfilling its mission with ever-increasing power and scope. He would be the first to give God the Father and Jesus Christ the credit for mercifully granting the blessings and strength to the Church that it has experienced.

Further, in the human realm, he would not claim personal credit for all that has been accomplished, because the work of many has contributed to what has been accomplished. But, it is nevertheless fitting to document some of the more notable steps forward that have occurred during his tenure in office, and to express gratitude to him and his wife, Marion, for their leader-



Les McCullough addresses Remnant Church of God group in Ghana as they join with United Jan. 19, 2002

per issue. The Church had published six booklets, and none in the preceding nine months. During his first address to the General Conference of Elders after being appointed president, he rhetorically asked the questions, "What motivates me? What do I consider most important?" He answered, "The Kingdom of God!" He expressed a strong desire to spread the message of the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Almost immediately, he proposed doing what was necessary to double

The Church now has 29 booklets in print. When Mr. McCullough took office, the first lesson of the *Bible Study Course* had been printed, but only as an insert in the "expanded" edition of the *Good News*, which was sent primarily to members of the Church. Now, the full 12-lesson course is in print, as stand-alone publications, being sent to many thousands of readers, most of whom are not members of the Church. The Church now also proclaims the gospel via the Internet, radio and cable TV. The amount of "seed" being sown has greatly increased in the last four years.

Spiritual and Financial Stability

In the spring of 1998, there was great upset in and around UCGIA, and the Church was very near financial collapse. There was significant and growing loss of membership and pastors for the local congregations. The Church faced substantial liabilities in the near term, far more than its bank balances or cash flow stream (which was diminishing at a rapid pace) could service. The Church's auditors would not issue the financial statements without expressing reservations about its ability to survive as a going concern.

Mr. McCullough addressed the Council of Elders concerning the gravity of the situation and received support for writing a letter to the membership of the Church, explaining candidly the reality the Church faced, requesting prayer and extra financial support.

The membership responded magnificently. A sizable special offering was received enabling the Church to survive that immediate crisis. Gradually, through conservative budgeting and financial management, including

very difficult cost-cutting measures, the Church's financial position has improved, and it now has modest emergency reserves.

More importantly, the Church is

doctrines and God's plan, in a structured and formal way. In the last 10 tumultuous years, the Church had lost its center of formal education, and simply does not now have the resources to duplicate it. In light of the Church's aging membership and ministry, there was a great need to do something, within the scope of what we could afford, to fill the gap of structured and intensive biblical instruction.

In the summer of 1999, Mr. McCullough presented to the Council of Elders a plan to begin a center of biblical instruction at the home office in Cincinnati. He urged them to act quickly to begin this program, and they unanimously adopted the proposal to begin that coming January.

The name that was adopted was ABC, the Ambassador Bible Center. The name is a reminder of the purpose of the program, emphasizing the basics (the "ABCs") of Genesis-to-Revelation exposition and the fundamental doctrines of the Church. The program has been enthusiastically embraced. With very little time to prepare and move to Cincinnati, 24 students attended that pioneer session in 2000. The second year, 40 attended, and this year there are 53. ABC represents a statement that UCGIA is looking to the future and will continue on with the work of the Church for



Media operation manager Peter Eddington and Les McCullough hold *United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*, one of 23 booklets published during Mr. McCullough's presidency

ship, service and example. Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. McCullough!

Vigorous Promotion of Proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God

At the time Mr. McCullough became president, the circulation of the *Good News* magazine was 80,000

the print run of the *Good News*, and this at a time of very limited financial strength for the Church. Then, within a year or so, he announced the very bold initiative of increasing the print run of the English language edition to 500,000 within another four years. It actually has taken only three years to reach that number.



Les McCullough welcomes students at ABC reception in 2001

now more settled and focused on its mission and the future. There has been modest, but steady growth in membership of the Church, as a result of God's calling.

Successful Transition of Home Office From California to Ohio

The entire home office operation was moved in the summer of 1998. Such a move is never easy, but it took place with relative smoothness.

Ambassador Bible Center

One of the most obvious needs of the Church is the duty to pass along to the next generation its unique, God-given understanding of the Bible, true

as long as God gives it the freedom and resources to do so.

Establishment of 403(b) Defined Contribution Plan

A very significant development occurred in 1999. One of the great financial "overhangs" on the Church is the fact that for 50 years, nothing had been set aside on a year-to-year basis to fund the retirement needs of its many employees. This amounted to an enormous unfunded future liability. To begin to address this sizable problem, Mr. McCullough proposed the adoption of a matching 403(b) plan in 1999, wherein employees voluntarily contribute a portion of their earnings each year to a tax-sheltered

personal retirement account, and the Church contributes a generous matching amount into the plan. This was the first such current funding of future retirement needs in the modern history of the Church.

Over the course of 10 to 20 years, this plan will gradually provide for some degree of retirement income security for the Church's employees, rather than total reliance on discretionary retirement payments, as has been the method in the past.

Growth Into a New Multipurpose Home Office Building

The last four years have been characterized by steady growth in many aspects of the work and fruit of the Church. Operations in Cincinnati had literally grown to the point of



Les McCullough with international campers at Camp Carter in 2000

bursting at the seams in our leased office and warehouse space. Seeing the growth that was being realized, Mr. McCullough brought to the Council a proposal to build a new building. Just as Mr. McCullough leaves office, we have moved into the new building which will house the administrative offices, media operations, mailing and warehousing operations, Ambassador Bible Center and auditorium for the Cincinnati East congregation's weekly Sabbath services. This beautiful and functional new facility will add in many ways to the operational efficiency of the home office operations.

Growth of the Camp and Other Youth Activities

During Mr. McCullough's tenure, the United Youth Camp program has made tremendous strides forward in serving the youth of the Church. He has been quite supportive of the Church's excellent camp leadership staff in developing a high-quality, safe, spiritually oriented camp program, which has been accredited by the American Camping Association.

In addition, the United Youth Corps has been initiated, providing service and leadership training programs internationally for the youth of the Church.

Steps for Unity—Church of God, a Christian Fellowship and Remnant Church of God

In the last two years, the first steps toward bringing brethren within the Church of God community together, rather than further fragmenting them, have taken place. The membership and ministry of the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship, have joined together with UCGA.

The same has taken place with regard to the Ghana-based Remnant Church of God.

Policy Development

During the last four years, Mr. McCullough has appointed task forces to work in a collaborative manner for the development of many administrative policy matters and oth-



"We want to see the work grow even more rapidly in strength and power to carry the gospel of Christ to all who will listen," writes Mr. McCullough

leadership and personal qualities during the last four years.

- "He helped save us financially; his many years of experience in administration of finances and budget and managing and his credibility in that area helped stabilize United. His vision in the area of how to promote and build the *GN* magazine—it has exceeded expectations. It has a high reputation for quality. He knew and understood the difference between a business and a Church."

- "God brought him to this point at the right time, when we really needed him. He has proven over many decades (from all that he has been through and his many different jobs in many different countries)—he has a world perspective, not just a U.S. perspective and that has added to his wisdom. He has showed us a wonder-

ful example of humility and graciousness in stepping aside peacefully; and



Les and Marion McCullough celebrate 50th anniversary; above, in his office in new building

has shown the Church the way to do it, even in disappointing circum-

stances. He truly appreciates the help of the wife of his youth, saying, "one of the best things I ever did was marry Marion."

stances. He truly appreciates the help of the wife of his youth, saying, "one of the best things I ever did was marry Marion."

- "He listens to others and accepts input."
- "He adapted to the 'new' way of doing things in UCG, and subordinated his opinion and will to the decisions of the [Council], when it went the other way."

- "He has provided good, sound, solid leadership—quiet leadership; he stated on more than one occasion that we simply had to do certain things to do the right thing, and rely on God in faith to make it work. On the other hand, he was often not quick to make decisions—he didn't make a lot of snap decisions; on important matters he took the time to sort through important matters before planting his feet."

- "He did not believe in changing a winning plan, but instead—expanding on it."

Conclusion

Mr. McCullough recognizes the hand of God in blessing his efforts, as well as the contributions of many others who have worked to bring about the progress of the last four years. His desire is that the Church continue on in its efforts to fulfill its commission



Les McCullough sweeping the entry of the new home office building as staff members begin moving boxes in Sunday, April 14 (photo by Michelle de Campos)

Excerpts From April 18 President's Letter

I would be very much remiss if I didn't take a few lines to thank all of you for the dozens of letters and e-mails Marion and I have received regarding our move and retirement. Thank you for your kindness. They have been very welcome and did create a bit of a lump in the throat at times. We have loved working and serving all of you and, of course, our great God. It has been very fulfilling and rewarding for us to have had a full life of service to the Body of Christ. We wish you all the best of everything as we move forward to the future.

This may well be my last letter to you, at least as president. Marion and I obviously will continue to serve in whatever way God intends in the future years. We will no doubt see some of you at various times at the Feast or wherever. Please give Mr. Holladay your support and prayers. He will need them and thank you for them. We want to see the work grow even more rapidly in strength and power to carry the gospel of Christ to all who will listen.

With much love,
Les and Marion McCullough

Dedication Caps Long Planning, Building and Moving Process

Continued from page 1

This was followed by singers from Cincinnati area choirs performing "Great Is the Lord" and "Journey of Faith."

Mr. McCullough then gave a dedication speech describing the history of the new building. A little over two years ago he was looking for property to consider for an office, and he visited this site just up the hill from the leased space the Church was using. "It wasn't much to look at," he said, describing the piles of dirt. But the Church leadership saw beyond that, and after bidding considerably less than the asking price and having the bid accepted, and after choosing between architectural proposals, the project began. Mr. McCullough said the chosen architect "did a beautiful job" of incorporating ideas he was shown.

"There have been ups and downs" in the building process, Mr. McCullough said. He thanked the staff members who have had the greatest involvement in coordinating with the builders: Tom Kirkpatrick, Dave Evans, Peter Eddington and Richard Kennebeck. He also thanked Sarah Kirkpatrick, who is coordinating the landscaping, which is in the beginning phases with most of the trees being planted in the previous three days.

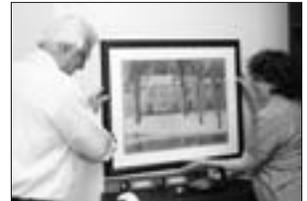
Mr. McCullough highlighted the fact that the building is a multipurpose building, dedicated to doing the work of the great God. He talked about the growing, "continually swamped" mailing office, the much needed warehouse (five times the square footage of the previous space, but eight times the space since it is much taller), the new studios for the media area and the ABC classroom area that will also be used for the Cincinnati East congregation. The only problem is, the congregation won't have much room to grow before reaching 300—the number the hall can seat! Room to grow was planned into other aspects of the building, including several empty offices and a space to build up to six more, as well as longer-range plans that could include adding on to the building.

The building has "met, and I think exceeded, our expectations," Mr. McCullough said. The Church has been "very graciously blessed by God," he said, and he thanked the brethren for their support. The building is "a tool to provide for the spiritual building, the Church of God."

Mr. McCullough then introduced Roy Holladay to give the dedication prayer, after which both men joined to cut a ribbon across the front entrance. **UN**



Roy Holladay and Les McCullough cut the ribbon. Right, scenes from the home office dedication May 4 (photos by Sonja Kireilis)



Clockwise from upper left: ABC students clean up parking lot; movers; Les McCullough and Sarah Kirkpatrick hang picture; Ralph Innis with new forklift; Mr. McCullough with the sign; the new warehouse; setting up the mail room; Richard Pinelli moves in; left, Paul Wasilkoff; below, Laura Peabody



GCE Focuses on "Equipping the Saints, Edifying the Body"

Continued from page 1

about 750 in 1995). But now new people, who had no contact with the Church in the past, are showing interest.

Only three employed elders are serving the entire continent. There is an elder serving in the office, and eight non-salaried elders (one inactive). A ministerial candidate is also being considered.

The Australian ministry suffers the tyranny of distance. The Church in Australia is also struggling with how it could serve other areas in Asia to its north where interest is being shown. A small group is forming in Singapore, and Jeff Caudle, the minister in New Zealand, has agreed to pastor them, with expenses paid by the Australian office. Papua New Guinea has also had a number of visit requests, but there is no manpower to serve them.

The gospel is being preached in Australia. *Good News* circulation has increased 51 percent, and is now about 14,000. The *Bible Study Course* has increased 38 percent. Promotion has been done through a *Reader's Digest* ad each year. Every doctor's office in Australia has been contacted to offer waiting room copies of *The Good News*. Australia is also using "householder cards" that individual members can distribute, which have a very low cost per response. Australia also sees the need for a "first contact" strategy to reach new people who have little interest in overtly religious topics.

Mr. Eddington also reported that there has been an encouraging 89 percent increase in donors and coworkers in Australia.

Eastern Europe

Johnny Lambert mentioned that he serves Eastern Europe under Victor Kubik. Eastern Europe is a large area, and so far we are not doing much work in most of those areas. But we have a small work going on in the Baltic Republics. In 1997 he was asked to go to Estonia for the Feast. (He said yes, but then asked, "Where is that?")

All of the former Communist world is stony soil. It's a difficult area, but God has people there. Henrikas Klovas, in Lithuania, was ordained in 2000. He has established a Web site with materials posted in Russian, Estonian, Lithuanian, etc. Recently we have been contacted by a group of 30 people in Poland!

We don't have a male leader in Estonia. We have had a Feast there since 1997. Last year we started to advertise on the radio in Estonia, and have a subscription list of 35. And 20 percent have attended Church!

Mr. Kubik plans to visit the area this summer. There will be a small Feast in Tartu, Estonia, again this year. With no international transfers, about 20 people are expected. Mr. Lambert said the Spirit of God has been moving on the waters in Eastern Europe, and he looks for future growth. He thanks the people of UCG for being the bringers of light.

Germany

Most Germans are listed as members of one of two major denominations, but

still Germany has become a very secular society. Paul Kieffer said the biggest job for the Church is to convince people that it is reasonable to believe that God does exist.

There are 150 with United in German-speaking areas. Four congregations have monthly services, two have services every three weeks and two are biweekly. More than half of the attendees are over age 50. Mr. Kieffer reported an encouraging 10 percent increase in Holy Day offerings for Unleavened Bread.

There are now over 4,000 subscribers to the German language version of *The Good News*. (There is no waiting room program in Germany.) The German office mails literature to 20 countries, but the vast majority is mailed to Germany itself. There are 12 booklets translated into German, and plans are to finish translating the *Bible Study Course* and a couple more booklets this year.



Gary Petty gives the keynote address, "To the Measure and the Stature of the Fullness of Christ" (photos by Peter Eddington)

For current promotions they are using an ad making the strong statement, "One day you will die. Do you know why you are alive?" They have also tested advertising in various magazines and got the same level of response with a health food magazine that they had received previously from a *Reader's Digest* ad, but at one third the cost.

New Zealand

Jeff Caudle reported that things are now very much stabilized for the Church in New Zealand. Mr. and Mrs. Caudle and their two children are Americans who have been serving in New Zealand for two and a half years.

New Zealand is a small nation with far more sheep than people, but there are new people showing interest in United. Mr. Caudle mentioned that five new people are coming along, including one person who had gone through the Correspondence Course many years ago and who found United recently. There are three small groups meeting on the North Island. About 40 are attending in Auckland, the largest city. Mr. Caudle flies when he goes to the congregation in Wellington at the far end of the North

Island. At this point there is only one United member in Christchurch on the South Island. Attendance at the Feast is about 120, with half being visitors from the United States and Australia.

Mr. Caudle mentioned that they have a very positive group of young people in New Zealand who are very enthusiastic about God's truth.

Mr. Caudle also reported on areas in the South Pacific served by New Zealand. In Fiji, there are currently five members scattered on both sides of the main island. Recently they started meeting together, driving the four hours to enjoy each other's fellowship. One member there has translated the entire New Testament into Fijian, and he has translated about 100 hymns. Even with no advertising, Fiji still has a sizable mailing list of about 200.

In Tonga, there are 27 people attending: 10 adults and 17 children. Mr. Caudle mentioned that the new pastor in

Mr. Kellers said there will probably be over 100 people for the Feast of Tabernacles this year. He mentioned that we have to be careful with the growth, since probably 5 percent of the *Good News* list will eventually contact us.

South Africa

André van Belkum reported on the work in southern Africa, including South Africa, Malawi, Mauritius, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Church has small offices in most of these countries, run on a voluntary basis by members in those areas helping out. In South Africa the office is in Neil Becker's and in his daughter's homes.

The *Good News* list in South Africa is 13,500, with 9,500 of these being sent to regular subscribers. They have tried a number of promotions. The most successful has been *Reader's Digest*, with a 3.4 percent response. They have also been putting specially packaged *Good News* magazines in people's mailboxes. They have been monitoring some of the post office boxes, and in one area, only three people discarded *The Good News* with their junk mail. We were able to collect those copies and use them again!

There has been a 31 percent increase in income and a 60 percent increase in Holy Day offerings for Unleavened Bread. Total attendance is about 350.

Malawi is a real growth point, going from six people last year up to 37. We will have our first Feast there this year.

The brethren in Zimbabwe appreciate our prayers for them in the difficulties they face. The brethren in Zambia are now facing a drought.

The secretary general of the Church of God, Seventh Day, has contacted us. Apparently 3,000 of them want to associate with us! Mr. van Belkum said with challenges like that to face, he is glad Bill Jahns will be there to help. He also mentioned that the Church in southern Africa appreciates the subsidy from the United States.

Spanish-Speaking Areas

Leon Walker gave greetings from the 18 Spanish-speaking ministers and reported that in 2001 there were 944 members in the Spanish-speaking areas, with 2,116 in attendance. This represents a steady growth in membership, with about 50 to 60 being baptized each year.

Mr. Walker related a few stories of those being called in the Spanish area. He told about a young man in Mexico who found us on the Internet. There's now a congregation of 35 in his city!

Saul Languarica told Mr. Walker about going to visit one person (he thought) in Argentina, but 15 people showed up and kept him four hours until he almost missed his bus.

Even in Cuba, there are a number of people who want to be baptized. They call us collect from time to time. Mr. Walker said we don't have the funds to send a minister now, and also there are political reasons we haven't sent anyone. But God has a way of calling people, and we're trying to find a way to visit them.

In Peru, Manuel Quijano was followed from a bank. Two men with pistols came after him. Then an SUV with

four men with guns stopped and chased the thugs. These four well-dressed men didn't say anything to Manuel, but one looked at him and smiled. "Who were these men?" Mr. Walker asked rhetorically. Latin America is a dangerous area, and the ministers and members need our prayers.

In Colombia, they have faced 50 years of civil war, and it is very dangerous. Mr. and Mrs. Walker were there for Passover and Unleavened Bread. A farmer told them he didn't know each day if he would get back home. He said keeping the Sabbath has kept him from being kidnapped, because Saturday is the day the guerrillas kidnap people!

Mr. Walker said the Spanish brethren would appreciate our continued prayers, as they remember us in their prayers.

Media Report

Peter Eddington, operation manager for Media and Communications Services, reported on the growth of the work in preaching the gospel. He feels we have set a solid foundation for future growth and described how we have come a long way in just the last 12 months. He also thanked the many elders involved in helping write and produce the publications.

The May/June print run for *The Good News* was over 517,000, a 43 percent increase from May/June 2001. This exceeded our goal of 425,000 by 22 percent. The plan for the next fiscal year is to hold the print run at around half a million and to focus on increasing the number of individual subscribers. This will be done by replacing non-renewing waiting rooms with individual subscribers, increasing the number of individual subscribers to about 75 percent of the total.

The *Bible Study Course* is currently going to 11,838 non-member households and about 3,500 graduates of the course are receiving tapes from the Church. What comes after this graduate program? A new offer has been designed for those who have received 12 months of tapes, and the first cards went out last week. This card asks if the *BSC* graduate wants to receive tapes from a local congregation and whether he or she wants to have the local pastor contact him or her.

Since United began, 1.88 million booklets have been printed on 28 topics—608,000 were printed just in 2001. The plans are to print three or four new booklets and to reprint up to 16 titles. *This Is the United Church of God* booklet is being worked on, and it will have photographs showing the many aspects of the Church and its work.

World News and Prophecy is being offered to coworkers and a new design for *United News* is debuting with this May issue.

The total mail processed at the home office is up 19 percent. Web responses are up 106 percent. Currently the responses are trickling in from promotions from the end of last year, since we have spent our promotional budget for the fiscal year. Donation mail continues to increase, and the number of donors is up 35 percent. Over 135,000 pieces of

literature have been mailed out from the home office so far this year. (This doesn't count the periodicals, such as *The Good News*, that are mailed directly from the printers.)

Mr. Eddington also discussed the subscriber development program which is designed to bring *Good News* readers along to greater understanding and involvement with the Church. In the harvest analogy, subscriber development helps water and fertilize the seeds that have been planted. This process starts with the first issue a subscriber receives, which is a specially produced issue that includes some of the best articles from the past and offers additional literature and gift subscriptions. Subscriber development also includes booklet offers and regular letters to subscribers.

Mr. Eddington also shared the following statistics: The home office has been averaging 178 new donors and 53 new coworkers per month. There have been 104 baptisms reported in the United States for 2002 as of the end of April, which is ahead of the pace for last year when 154 were baptized for the year.

Mr. Eddington also talked about the print promotions used to attract new *Good News* readers. About 6.5 million brochures and insert cards were distributed, and the cost per response was reduced by a dollar this year. The goal is to reduce the cost per response to \$2 for next year. *Good News* brochures have been distributed in 4,000 supermarkets. Congregations have been involved in distributing 69,000 copies of the *GN* on newsstands, as well as a successful saturation mailing program.

Internet traffic has had a dramatic increase of about 270 percent! Mr. Eddington also said that the Bible Reading Program has been very well received, and he mentioned the new e-learning modules—an on-line version of the *Bible Study Course* that Dan Deininger's team hopes to roll out later this month. Mr. Eddington gave his thanks to Mr. Deininger and his team of volunteers.

Mr. Eddington also mentioned that the *Good News* radio program has received 4,200 calls to date. We are currently on nine stations and plan to go back to 14 or 15 stations next year. He also mentioned the cable access TV efforts, and that the program being produced in Portland is adding a review process to kick it up a notch.

Official Annual Meeting

The business session of the Annual Meeting of the General Conference of Elders was called to order at 2 p.m. After the approval of the minutes for the 2001 meeting, the elders balloted on the business at hand. (See results in the box at right.)

Address From the Treasurer

Treasurer Tom Kirkpatrick spoke next. Here are extended excerpts from his notes:

"I am pleased to report that the financial condition of the United Church of God is good and stable. In that regard, we can certainly say that God has been merciful to us. In the past year, the brethren and others who support the work of the Church have been faithful and generous in tithes and offerings. So

far this year, we have seen moderate but steady growth, and this in the midst of an economic downturn. The leaders, managers and employees of the Church have, by and large, exhibited commendable cooperation and discipline in adhering to our budget, so as to give the process—the process of careful and systematic stewardship of the monies God makes available to us—credibility and viability.

"We are still a church of little strength and income, but I believe we have the



Marion and Les McCullough with gifts from the Council and GCE

right message and a desire to spread it. Our relative little can go a long way, longer than is explainable by mere human effort. But we are still small—awfully small. A couple of years ago I noted that a good quarterback received more income in a year than this entire Church. We have grown some since then. Now, a really good shortstop makes more.

"For the current fiscal year (2001-2), we conservatively budgeted total income growth of 2.25 percent. When this fiscal year is over in a couple of months, it now looks like actual income growth will be about 5.7 percent, depending in large measure on the size of the Pentecost Holy Day offering. For next fiscal year we are budgeting, if approved, total income growth of about 4 percent.

"The Church keeps its books on a fiscal year that begins July 1 and ends the following June 30. Our financial statements for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2001, were audited by the Cincinnati-based CPA firm of Clark, Schaefer, Hackett and Co. The results of that audit were reported in the September/October 2001 issue of *United News*. The auditors gave us an unqualified opinion, and all key financial ratios from those statements represented an improvement from the previous year. We anticipate a similarly positive report for financial statements for the fiscal year that will end this coming June 30.

"I suppose that it is good to remind ourselves on these occasions that compared to our fairly recent past (the last 20 years or so) we have but little financial strength, but at least it is a little strength and not a lot of weakness (translate: deficit). And always, we must remember that whatever we have comes from God. We truly are grateful for the solid balance sheet we are able to produce now, and hope and pray that God

will bless us with the resources, and the wisdom and discipline to use those resources, so that future balance sheets will show similar stability.

"I think most of us remember what it was like just four years ago, when this Church teetered on the brink of collapse, financially, and perhaps in other ways. As gut churning as that was, it did have a salubrious effect—it got a lot of people on their knees every day and night—crying out to God to save us, to be merciful to us, to give us another chance to

• That being the case, our operating reserves should then be restored to the level of averaging about 10 weeks of expenditures throughout the year.

Dr. Kirkpatrick also pointed out that there have been no changes in the salary ranges in the past year.

He concluded his remarks with a tribute to the McCulloughs.

"I would like to echo the sentiments of so many of you in paying public tribute to the work, indeed the lifetime of work in service to God and His Church, of Mr. Les McCullough and his wife, Marion. They have made a significant contribution to the stability and the momentum forward we enjoy today in the United Church of God. I appreciate that contribution very much, and I believe the overwhelming majority of you do as well. He will be missed here. But I am glad that his service to the Church will continue in whatever capacity is open to him. Thank you, both of you, very much."

Address From the President

Les McCullough joked with the elders, asking what he could say to a bunch of people who make their living speaking.

In his report, Mr. McCullough stressed, "Look what God has wrought!" He pointed to the many areas of growth in the work and the stability of the Church since the unsettled times of four years ago. The growth has been amazing, and Mr. McCullough said it wasn't what we have done, but God has blessed us. He encouraged all of us to keep doing our jobs, to pray, fast and serve, to ask God to provide more laborers. We depend on God. Ask and you will receive, he reminded everyone.

Mr. McCullough told a story, mentioned recently in a sermonette in Cincinnati, of a Church member who was walking down the street when she realized she was in great danger. But for some reason the dangerous person left her alone, and was arrested for assaulting someone else. When asked why he didn't harm the Church member, he said he wasn't about to mess with her with those two big guys next to her! What two guys? She didn't see them.

Mr. McCullough said we also depend on what we don't see, and he gave an appeal to all to keep at it in serving God.

Address From the New President

Roy Holladay began by expressing great appreciation for what Les and Marion McCullough have done. He outlined many of the important advances in the work of the Church during Les McCullough's tenure as president, including the great growth in circulation of *The Good News*, the production and distribution of many new booklets, the

Bible Study Course, the launch of ABC, the building of the new home office building, the progress of the youth camps, etc.

Mr. Holladay then presented gifts from the Council and GCE to the McCulloughs. First, his wife, Norma, gave a bouquet to Marion McCullough for her support of the work and her husband. Then Mr. McCullough was called up to unwrap a gift of a clock with an inscription about going into all the world to preach the gospel.

Then Mr. Holladay talked about the transition in the offices of president and chairman of the Council. He mentioned that so often in transitions, there is rancor and bitterness, but that we in the Church are striving to live a different way. He noted that the previous transition of Council chairmen went smoothly, and that the world is looking at us now to see if we have peace and love (John 13:35).

He mentioned that he and his wife have been in the Cincinnati area house-hunting, watching Mr. McCullough and the home office staff and getting the feel of things. He expressed his appreciation that during this time Mr. and Mrs. McCullough have been so gracious to them.

Mr. Holladay said that people ask him: What are you going to do? He plans to have continuity in fulfilling the mission of the Church in preaching the gospel and taking care of the Church.

As a Church, we recognize how much the ministry is needed if the Church is to grow and be maintained. Mr. Holladay gave a brief description of his pastoral background. He has been in the ministry since 1963, serving as Feast coordinator, regional coordinator and member of the Council of Elders. He seeks to have the heart of a shepherd like all of the elders do. He said that all of us have opportunities to serve God's people, just in different capacities. He mentioned that he is looking forward to serving all of us.

In closing Mr. Holladay read Psalm 133 about the benefits of unity, and he mentioned that he thinks there is a connection between "life forevermore" (mentioned in verse 3) and "unity."

Keynote Address: "To the Measure and the Stature of the Fullness of Christ"

After a break, Mr. Holladay introduced Gary Petty for the keynote address based on the theme of the conference found in Ephesians 4:11-16.

Mr. Petty said that serving in the ministry is always challenging. It is easy for elders to become so burdened with the details of ministry that they forget what God has called them to accomplish as outlined in Ephesians 4. Why does God

Ballot Results

| ITEM | #YES | #NO | PASSED |
|--|------|-----|--------|
| 1. 2002-2003 Strategic Plan | 259 | 24 | Yes |
| 2. 2002-2003 Operation Plan | 268 | 17 | Yes |
| 3. 2002-2003 Budget | 265 | 17 | Yes |
| 4. Amendment to Bylaws Section 9.1 | 84 | 196 | No |
| 5. Amendment to Bylaws Sections 12.2.2.1, 2, 4 | 261 | 16 | Yes |

The text of approved amendment is on the Web at www.ucg.org/amendments

ordain such positions in His Church? To prepare God's people for works of service and to build up the Church.

How can the ministry build up the Church? A pastor is a shepherd and an elder—an older brother—not a manager in an office many floors above the workplace. Scripture calls the ordained ministry both elders and overseers. Overseer is an administrative term, while elder is a tribal or family term, a term of relationship. As older brothers, the ministry must first love the other children before they can lead them, Mr. Petty said.

After Paul lists the two purposes of the office-bearers of the Church, he lists five goals, Mr. Petty said. The first is "the unity of the faith." The second is "knowledge of the Son of God" and the third goal is to become Christlike. The fourth goal involves teaching the brethren to recognize and withstand "every wind of doctrine" and "the trickery of men." And the fifth goal is to speak the truth in love.

When members become more Christlike, there are four major results, Mr. Petty said. They are Christian unity, effectiveness in fulfilling the Church's mission, spiritual growth of the Church and the Church building itself up in love. The Church is built up because godly character is apparent in its relationships.

Mr. Petty concluded, "If we willingly accept the calling of God to serve Him and prepare His children for the Kingdom, then what choice do we have but to expend every ounce of our lives in having Christ fulfill in us the instructions of Ephesians 4?"

Address on GCE Annual Meetings

After the keynote address, the official Annual Meeting of the GCE was adjourned, and the meeting continued with an address by Roy Holladay about planning future GCE meetings.

Mr. Holladay mentioned that the Council wanted him to address this subject. At the last Council meeting, while discussing the budget, the Council was considering whether or not to have a fully-funded GCE meeting bringing in all elders in 2003. The Council decided the Church could not afford it and still expand in preaching the gospel. Several Council members had serious reservations about spending that much money. Council members didn't question the value of face-to-face meetings, but the cost, considering the priority of preaching the gospel, seemed too much.

Mr. Holladay mentioned that this subject would be the main focus of the meeting that evening with the Council, giving the elders the opportunity to give the Council their input.

Mr. Holladay gave a set of questions the Council wanted the elders to give answers to at the evening meeting, such as "Have our purposes for annual meetings changed?"

"Pay your own way" GCE meetings cost \$70,000 to \$80,000. The budget this year was \$78,000. In 1998, the last year a fully-funded meeting was held, the cost was \$278,000.

Other items to discuss include the frequency of meetings (annual, every other year, every third year? Right now, our governing documents say annual). If not every year, how will we maintain com-

munication and contact? Would the ministry feel cut off?

Mr. Holladay read what the Church's governing documents have to say about the GCE meetings and mentioned that if we change anything, we would need to change our documents accordingly.

South Africa Video Clip

Since news of Howard Davis' trip to South Africa to help shoot a PBS special, some have asked if they could see the documentary that featured André van Belkum, Vic Kubik, LifeNets and United. So the GCE was able to view a clip of that documentary. Also, the Church has access to all the videotape Mr. Davis shot in South Africa.

Council of Elders—Discussion on GCE Planning

At 8 p.m. all 12 members of the Council of Elders shared the stage for a discussion with the elders about future GCE meetings, based on the questions Mr. Holladay had brought up earlier in the day. More than 30 elders shared their input and questions on this subject. A number of speakers declared their belief in the value of these face-to-face meetings with elders from around the world, and the role of the GCE meetings in the mission of the Church.

The Council received a number of ideas for consideration about how to make it more equitable for elders at a greater distance from Cincinnati, and a number of other suggestions were also put forward.

"Equipping the Saints for the Work of Ministry"

Melvin Rhodes gave his presentation Saturday night (for elders who wouldn't be able to stay until Monday) and again on Monday morning. He pointed out that the world has changed since the elders listening to him first came into the Church. Then the *United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy* booklet was the most requested booklet. Now it's *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* Those coming in contact with the Church today don't know God's laws, and so they face suffering in their lives and don't know how to get out.

Mr. Rhodes said the emphasis in the past was too often on punishment and control, putting people out of the Church for various problems. Matthew 9:9 shows that Jesus mixed with sinners; He said they were the ones who need help. John 8 describes the woman caught in adultery. Jesus said, "Go and sin no more."

The word *trespasses* in James 5:16 means a moral fault. People in the Church should be able to share their problems and get help. Paul knew there were people with the sins described in 1 Corinthians 6:9 who had overcome them.

But people in the Church with difficult problems may feel afraid to talk to the pastor, he said. And in our world today, so many people God is calling face these difficult problems. The following examples are from United: One woman wrote that her husband was addicted to pornography on the Internet. A manic/depressive person was told by his pastor not to go to a psychiatrist. Two ladies were attracted to each other. A

man had feelings for other men, but was not sexually active. A woman was addicted to alcohol—she had started drinking after being raped.

Ephesians 4 talks about equipping the saints for the work of ministry. This involves preparing them to help the ministry, and also to help others in the Church. The ministry is to educate members on the causes of some of the great problems in our world today, as well as the solutions.

The minister's initial reaction is important. Mr. Rhodes said he will always regret the work he pulled away from a leper in Ghana years ago. We have to be careful how we react to people seeking help. Consider Christ's example in John 8. Christ wasn't a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Christ didn't react negatively; He listened and thought things through. He was very for-

giving. What if she had sinned again? Matthew 18 refers to forgiving 70 times 7.

Luke 15—the parable of the prodigal son—shows God's forgiveness to a repentant sinner. But sometimes the "brothers" in the Church want the person to be punished. They can be harsh to others even when they have been forgiven of the same sins.

People need assurance they can talk to their minister about anything. The example in 1 Corinthians 5 shows that there are reasons to put someone out of the Church. But in most cases if you put someone out, he or she won't come back. Some seem to think you have to be perfect to come to Church.

A teen asked, "Why can't all ministers be on the same page?" He had ear-rings, and one congregation accepted him, while another turned him away.

Mr. Rhodes asked how we want to be remembered. As merciful?

Mr. Rhodes' seminar was followed by six breakout sessions to discuss these concepts further.

"Humble... Yet Bold"

Bob Berendt used the story of Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I's funeral to introduce his subject. When the emperor's casket arrived at the church, it was not allowed in when announced with all the emperor's many exalted titles. But when he was announced as a poor sinner, the doors opened wide. The Catholic Church designed this ceremony to remind the royalty of the need for humility.

How can ministers be both humble and bold? Mr. Berendt compared it to rid-

See "GCE," page 19

International Ministers Share Ideas

by Mario Seigle

Before the General Conference of Elders meetings was an ideal time for representatives from around the world to share their experiences on matters dealing with a growing international work.

On May 1, 55 attendees from the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and the United States met in Cincinnati, Ohio, to discuss questions sent in from the different nations. The term "cross-pollination" was used to describe the benefit of sharing ideas and solutions from around the globe.

Roy Holladay served as moderator of the meeting and presented the topics sent in from the international areas.

The first question on the agenda was, "How can the international areas work more closely with each other?"

Kingsley Mather, from the Caribbean region, mentioned this can be accomplished by communicating regularly with other regions. For instance, he sees the need to do so with the Spanish area, since a group in northern Brazil is being handled from the Caribbean region, but can be better served if ministers from the Spanish area also participate.

Tony Wasilkoff, from Canada, indicated *United News* could eventually become a clearinghouse of ideas for the international areas. Peter Eddington, from Media and Communications Services at the home office, commented that the different areas can keep abreast of the other regions by obtaining their international updates available in printed or electronic form from places such as the Philippines, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany and South Africa.

Another question discussed was, "As an international area, what involvement would you like the president and the Council of Elders to have with your region?"

Bill Eddington, from Australia, mentioned it is always helpful to have members of the Council of Elders visit their area, especially for Holy Days, in order to build a rapport with the local ministers and congregations. John Jewell, from the

United Kingdom and a member of the Council of Elders, said it is important for the areas to express an interest in such a visit so the purpose can be perfectly clear for making such a trip, and thus avoiding any misunderstandings.

Next the group dealt with the need to develop manpower in the different countries.

Joel Meeker, representing the French areas, mentioned they are developing leadership skills through the local Spokesmen's Clubs. André van Belkum, from South Africa, said they are using written materials from the home office and the U.S. regional pocket ministerial conferences.

A question arose about how to ensure that the cultural values in the international areas are respected and protected.

John Jewell commented that they inserted a supplement in the United Kingdom edition of *The Good News* that deals with local issues to give the magazine a more British outlook. Paul

should be presented with utmost care.

Lastly, the group discussed how each country goes about spreading the gospel in its region.

John Jewell mentioned that in the United Kingdom they use the *Good News* magazine and a local radio program as the primary vehicles to get the gospel out. He said the key to being effective is keeping the mailing list growing with quality subscribers.

Kingsley Mather said that in areas of the Caribbean they are having success placing *The Good News* in schools and waiting rooms.

Tony Wasilkoff explained that *Reader's Digest* ads in Canada have been a good vehicle for new subscribers, but noted that this magazine has slowly been changing its editorial outlook and its new readers are no longer as positive toward religious publications.

Bill Eddington commented that in Australia they have 14,000 subscribers, and they would like to increase the list

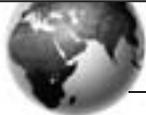


International ministers gather May 1 (photo by Peter Eddington)

Kieffer, from Germany, stressed that no size fits all in regard to *The Good News*, and so the magazine is customized to better fit the mentality of the Germans. "People should reject the magazine if they don't agree with the content," he emphasized, "but not because it appears to be too much American." Carmelo Anastasi, from Italy, added that there are topics that Europeans are especially sensitive to, and therefore these

to 20,000 readers. He added that *Reader's Digest* ads have helped to gain new subscribers, but the main vehicle for subscriber growth has been a waiting room program.

The meeting ended in late afternoon and resulted in a better appreciation of the challenges each area faces and with a host of new ideas to better carry out Christ's orders to preach the gospel in all the world. UN



News From **Around the World**

Congregation Converts to UCG

After the funeral for her late husband, recently widowed member Mrs. Hermodina Barrientos (formerly with the Jerusalem Church who now resides in Leyte) advised all her grown children residing in Compostela Valley to invite Edmond Macaraeg for a Bible study. (With their parents, these children grew up as Seventh-Day Adventists.)

One of the siblings who attended that Bible study was the wife of the SDA church leader in Pantukan. Convinced of all the things she heard, she asked Mr. Macaraeg to conduct a similar study the very next Sabbath right in their local congregation, about 60 miles northeast of Davao City.

Afternoon Bible Study

Mr. Macaraeg started his Bible study by saying that he did not intend to add to what is written in the Bible, nor would he take away from it. Also, in matters where further interpretation is needed, we should allow the Bible to interpret itself. And since the Bible is the Word of God, there should be no contradiction among the verses and its teachings. All agreed to such standards.

Mr. Macaraeg pointed out that one of the problems of humanity and of religions is the lack of true and correct knowledge. Compounding this is deception. He asked them to read Revelation 12:9 where it says that Satan has deceived the whole world—which, of course, includes all the great and well-established religions.

But what if these proclaimed the name of Christ? He asked them to read Matthew 24:4-5; where it says that many will do that in the end time and will deceive many (the majority). What if

they are able to do great, even miraculous religious works? He asked them to read Matthew 7:21-23 where Christ said, "I never knew you."

If a person claims to really "know" someone, Mr. Macaraeg continued, he will no doubt know the details of that person's life. The most important personality in Christianity is none other



Church members in Pantukan (photo by Charles Macaraeg)

than Jesus Christ Himself. Mr. Macaraeg then led them to test whether the popular Christian religions of this world really "know" Christ, by covering two basic topics: Christ's birth and Christ's death.

Christ's Birth and Death

He asked them when Christ was born. They unanimously answered Dec. 25. Then he asked them to read Luke 2:8 where it says that shepherds were out in the field on the night of Christ's birth. He explained that such would be impossible in the middle of a winter night in Judea. Other verses and historical facts conclusively showed that the major Christian religions do not know the truth about the birth of Christ, the Messiah.

He next asked when Christ died. Again, they unanimously answered Good Friday. He asked them to read Matthew 12:40 where it says that, as in the case of Jonah, Christ would be "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (tomb). It is not a combination of days and nights because Christ Himself defined how long a day is (John 11:9).

Coming to a Major Decision

The afternoon Bible study was followed by an open forum. When all their other questions were answered from the Bible, they concluded they had found the truth and the Church that has the truth. They wanted to make a drastic move to sever relations with their previous church. Mr. Macaraeg advised them to make it formal and to take the time to decide individually.

He later received a long-distance phone call from them confirming their desire. Together with some Davao City church leaders, he visited them to arrange for regular Sabbath meetings with them.

Doctrinal Defender Convinced

When the news reached the upper hierarchy of their previous church, a defender of their original teachings was sent, unannounced, to challenge the Church of God teachings. But after receiving answers from Daniel Macaraeg (an Ambassador graduate and son of Edmond Macaraeg) who was leading the Bible study that day, the "defender" confided that he also wanted to learn more of God's truths, and has come back for more Bible studies!

This article first appeared in United News Philippines, www.ucg.org.ph.

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Canadian GN Mailing

by Ed van Pelt

Have you ever wondered what's involved in mailing an issue of *The Good News*? Here's a behind-the-scenes look at how the *GN* is sent in Canada.

The underlying reason for sending the magazine the way we do is found inside the front cover of *The Good News*. Easily overlooked near the bottom of the masthead on page 2 is the following: "Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement Number 1487140." That's the key to the whole process.

Put simply, our Canada Post publications mail agreement allows us to send the *GN* for a fraction of the cost of sending it by regular letter mail. The reason is that we do a lot of the work that Canada Post would normally do. By preparing the mail ourselves, we save the costs Canada Post would incur and they pass the savings on to us. And those savings are substantial. Our cost to mail the *GN* is about 50 to 65 percent of the regular letter mail rate. The savings add up.

First, the magazines are shipped from the printer in the United States to our office in Halton Hills. Once they arrive, an up-to-date mailing list is copied onto a floppy disk (first the regular subscriber list, followed by the waiting room list).

The disk with the names and addresses is run through an address verification program supplied by Pitney Bowes and all the addresses are analyzed and corrected where necessary. This process can take some time, but it is vital to the success of the mailing. (Any new names that are added to our mailing lists are checked with Canada Post in order to

verify the correct address format.) At least 95 percent of the addresses must be correct in order to qualify for the publications mail rate. Our addresses are usually over 97 percent correct.

After the addresses are verified, they are then sorted into a seemingly random order. The envelopes are then printed and sorted into bundles and containers. Each bundle must be no more than about 20 centimeters (about eight inches) thick after the magazine is inserted. Each container must not be more than 90 percent full and must not weigh more than 27 kilograms (about 60 pounds). The software determines the makeup of the bundles and containers.

Wayne Lue usually prints the envelopes. He also oversees the stuffing and sealing of the envelopes, being careful to maintain the order of the envelopes within each bundle and the number of bundles in each container.

Once the envelopes are sealed, they are banded into bundles which are placed into the corresponding container. The remaining paperwork is completed and the containers are loaded into the Church van (as well as Anthony Wasilkoff's van, if needed) and taken to the Gateway sorting facility in Mississauga.

Once there, they are sent across Canada. Quite often they will then be placed right into the letter carrier's mailbox for final delivery.

The whole process, from the arrival of the magazines at the office until they are delivered to Gateway, usually takes less than a week. Volunteers have helped with the mailing in the past and will continue to do so as the volume of mail increases. **UN**

Zambian Brethren Receive Training and Cattle Through LifeNets

by Victor Kubik

United Church of God brethren in Zambia who lost their cattle to disease have now received 24 heifers and two bulls through LifeNets and the generosity of many members.

The brethren live in two settlements in the Mumbwa region of Zambia that totally lost their cattle due to corridor disease almost five years ago. With this they lost their draft power and milk protein source.

Women and children have been pulling plows. The quality of an already impoverished economy had deteriorated further.

LifeNets, a charitable organization founded by Council of Elders member Victor Kubik, made a commitment to restore the cattle. In addition, LifeNets wanted to make certain that every measure was followed to minimize the risk of infectious diseases infecting and killing the animals. So in July 2000, André van Belkum and Victor Kubik

traveled to the Mumbwa area of Zambia to assess the situation and take action.

It was determined that 24 heifers and two bulls were needed for the two communities. Funds were raised in the United States for the project. With the usual delays that are typical of working in Africa, plus a hoof-and-mouth scare in the summer of 2001, progress was hindered. But finally the last week of October a training seminar was held in the Nalubanda settlement where the cattle were going to be delivered.

In this seminar, Gibbson Simalyata, an agriculture professor at the University of Zambia in Monze, conducted a six-day training seminar called "Pass on the Gift." Plans are to help others in the Mumbwa region who have lived in similar circumstances to the people we are working with.

On Dec. 3, 2001, the cattle were delivered as the rainy season arrived. The cattle were purchased across the Kafue River. The people from the village walked 25 miles to pick up the cat-



Maxwell Kasakabantu putting his hand to the plow with new cattle

tle. They had to swim them 200 yards across the river herded by two canoes on each side of the line of swimming animals.

We were not able to find out what was going on in the remote settlements after the rainy season began in mid-

November, but after the rains in late March 2002 Kambani Banda, UCG elder and LifeNets Zambia affiliate director, traveled to Mumbwa and took photos of the Brahma heifers, which had already grown considerably since December.

Donors and Volunteers

Many volunteers helped pull this project together and make it a great success. Vern Hargrove and the Hammond and Elkhart, Indiana, congregations donated the first \$2,000 to this project. Other donors include the Cape Girardeau, Missouri, congregation, Carl Hoffman, John Hendrick and Ken Zahora. Special thanks to Illinois farmers Ken and his son Alex Kerr who donated money for four calves and one plow.

On the implementation end, Kambani Banda traveled from the capital city of Lusaka many times, making the dusty four-hour trip to drive 100 miles to Mumbwa. He has overseen the purchase of the cattle. Gibbson Simalyata took time from a busy teaching schedule at the University of Zambia to conduct the six-day training seminar. André van Belkum also helped coordinate this project as LifeNets South Africa affiliate director.

For more information, see www.lifeness.org. **UN**

Caribbean Ministers Take Month-Long Trip

■ God continues to bless the work in the Caribbean region. Arnold Hampton and Kingsley Mather made a month-long trip through the region, encouraging brethren and meeting individuals who would like to be associated with UCG.

by Kingsley O. Mather

The trip began on Feb. 4, 2002, when Arnold Hampton, Todd Carey and Kingsley Mather made the first stop in Jamaica.

Caribbean Youth Camp

The men flew to Montego Bay, Jamaica, for a tour of the proposed Caribbean Summer Camp, the first since UCG got started almost seven years ago. The trip to the Madge Saunders Retreat and Conference Centre, St. Mary, Jamaica, was most encouraging. The three elders toured the camp, which is about a half-hour's drive from the Renaissance Jamaica Grande Resort, Ocho Rios, site of this year's Feast of Tabernacles.

The camp is a fine facility and will afford campers an excellent opportunity to be instructed in God's way of life while enjoying the beauty of Jamaica. The camp will run from Aug. 11-18, 2002. Mr. Carey has been selected as the camp's director. Leeford Burke of the Kingston congregation will assist him. Mr. Carey flew back to the United States Feb. 7.

South America Next

Feb. 7, Mr. Hampton and Mr. Mather continued their trek through the southern part of the region. They flew from Kingston, Jamaica, to Port of Spain, Trinidad, and connected with a flight to Georgetown, Guyana. Thursday was preparation for the 10-day trip to the interior of Guyana and an Amerindian village in Brazil. They stopped at a bank to exchange U.S. dollars for Guyana currency at a rate of US\$1 for G\$188.

The two elders also visited brethren in Long Creek, Guyana, about a one-hour drive from the capital, Georgetown. They met with one member, Lloyd Dexter, and two *Good News* readers.

Sabbath in Wowetta Village

The next morning, Friday, Feb. 8, at 6 a.m. the two elders boarded a single-engine plane for the two-hour flight to Annai, North Rupununi. This flight is rather interesting. Each passenger is allowed only 15 pounds baggage and is weighed before boarding the flight. Many passengers wear large coats or baggy pants to take various items in their pockets. The two elders also did as the Guyanese do, but without the coats. They had to arrange to leave most of their baggage in Georgetown or give most of the money for the trip to the air-

line in overweight fines. Clyde Chinian, our Guyana contact, his wife and two children also accompanied the elders on the flight.

It was a pleasant flight that landed next to the Rock View Hotel where they



Judith Moses and her son, Narash, of Wowetta Village, Guyana

planned to stay during their visit to that area. The hotel is pleasant and is set in a beautiful garden with a pool, cages with monkeys and other animals. Cows, pigs, chickens and horses can be seen roaming the farm. A lot of the food that is served in the restaurant is produced on the farm. They also process and sell cashews that are fresh and very delightful. The meals are served family style and guests eat with the owner and his family. He is British and developed the resort from the ground up.

The next morning was the Sabbath. Sean Mendoca, a member that Mr. Hampton baptized in 2001, walked seven miles from his home to the hotel so that he could travel with the ministers to Wowetta Village, where Sabbath services were conducted. The meeting took the form of a question-and-answer session. A broad range of topics were discussed including plans for the 2002 Feast of Tabernacles. The brethren will travel to Muscou, Brazil for the Feast of Tabernacles. They are planning to plant peanuts that will be sold to supplement their Festival tithe.

Lethem, Aishalton and Palm Springs, Rupununi

The two ministers traveled by car from Annai to Lethem, Central Rupununi. It was a grueling trip since the roads were in bad condition. Brethren from Aishalton, South Rupununi, were expected to travel to Lethem to meet with the elders, but they encountered



The congregation in Aishalton, Guyana

difficulty since there is no regular bus service.

Since they did not arrive at the expected time Mr. Hampton and Mr.

Mather decided to rent a vehicle to take them to Aishalton, South Rupununi, about 100 miles of bad or nonexistent roads. Since the area did not experience heavy rain during January, the trip was much easier than the one in February 2001.

It was an interesting and encouraging visit with the brethren in that village. The elders counseled and baptized four people, had a Q&A session and sang and recorded a number of the songs from the church's hymnal. The brethren will use these during worship services on the Sabbath. This will help them to learn how to sing the songs from the UCG hymnal during services.

The four baptisms bring the membership to six. They have a weekly Sabbath attendance of about 15. The children are taught on the Sabbath from Sabbath Bible lessons provided by Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell Knapp. The brethren have one special Sabbath each month, when a potluck lunch is served. That Sabbath, the attendance swells since a number of the people in the community visit services for the activity. The members of the group are hoping to attend the Feast in Muscou, Brazil, if the area does not flood during the rainy season.



The congregation in Muscou, Brazil

The two elders also visited the oldest member in Guyana, John Atkinson who lives in Palm Springs, South Rupununi, which is about 20 miles further south. Mr. Atkinson, a retired schoolteacher, was baptized in February 2001. His son and daughter-in-law were two of the persons baptized in Aishalton during this trip.

Brazil

Mr. Hampton and Mr. Mather left Aishalton Feb. 13 and were driven back to Lethem by Mr. Chinian. Then they took a short ferry ride to the Brazil side of the river. The ministers traveled to Boa Vista, Brazil, where they spent the night in a small hotel. The next day they took care of some business before traveling to Muscou, Brazil, the Amerindian village where our congregation meets.

The group in Brazil began the process to register the Church in that country. They held their first board meeting and selected a chairman, secretary and treasurer of their board. They

also discussed plans for the Feast of Tabernacles. The local members will put up two buildings to accommodate the brethren who will travel from Guyana to attend the Feast.

The two elders spent two days in Muscou planning for the Feast and discussing other Church business. Sabbath services were well attended, and it was a joy to hear the brethren sing. It was especially enjoyable when they sang in their native language. It is hoped that some of the songs in the UCG hymnal can be translated into their native tongue.

Mr. Hampton and Mr. Mather left Muscou after Sabbath services and traveled by car and ferry back to Lethem. Sunday, Feb. 17, they took a flight back to Georgetown, Guyana, and ended their visit to brethren in Guyana and Brazil.

Visiting Six Islands

Monday, Feb. 18, the elders left Guyana to visit brethren in six islands in the Caribbean. Mr. Mather stopped in Port of Spain, Trinidad, while Mr. Hampton continued on to Bridgetown, Barbados. The work in Trinidad is still in its infancy. While Trinidad has the largest *Good News* mailing list in the

response always has been very good. Mr. and Mrs. Fredericks are distributing 700 magazines each month. It is hoped that regular Sabbath services will be started later this year.

Thursday, Feb. 21 Mr. Mather flew from Trinidad to Dominica, where a small group meets each Sabbath. On Friday evening brethren met at the home of Maxwell Victor for a Bible study that was followed by a sumptuous dinner prepared by Mrs. Victor. The group included two visitors from another Church of God.

Sabbath morning Mr. Mather left his hotel at 4:30 a.m. for an early flight to the next stop, St. Lucia. The congregation in St. Lucia has grown to a weekly attendance of 12 to 15. Mr. Hampton is responsible for St. Lucia and Barbados and visits the two congregations about five times a year. The brethren are also nourished with video and audio sermons from Cincinnati and Mr. Hampton. The group met later that evening at the home of Andre Arthur, a lawyer who is a member of the Church. Light refreshments were served and brethren fellowshiped.

Sunday, Mr. Hampton returned to the United States, and Mr. Mather continued his trip to visit brethren on two other islands. The next stop on Mr. Mather's itinerary was St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. We have a longtime member, Vincent Herbert, living there. He has established several *Good News* outlets and this has resulted in an increased circulation of the *GN* on that island. Mr. Mather also made contact with two longtime members of the Church of God who live on St. Croix. The two members took a ferry to St. Thomas on Monday, Feb. 25. They indicated that they want to be considered members of UCG. Plans are underway for Mr. Herbert to visit them on a regular basis so that they can fellowship together.

The final stop was St. Kitts where we have two members, Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Bart. The Barts have been associated with UCG for about five years. Mr. Mather had a Bible study with them.

This was a very encouraging trip and the elders are pleased to see that God



Kingsley Mather followed by a curious flock

continues to bless His work in the Caribbean. The greatest need in the Caribbean region is manpower. Please pray that God will send more laborers to assist in serving the brethren scattered over thousands of miles of ocean and in remote areas on the continent of South America. **UW**

"God Is Busy in Nigeria," Visiting Minister Says

■ Fred Kellers' and Bruce Gore's trip to Nigeria reveals tremendous potential for growth in the country.

by Bruce Gore

Fred Kellers and I just returned from a very productive trip to a large country on the west coast of Africa—Nigeria. It was my first trip to Africa. I saw more newer Mercedes cars in Africa than in our own country. Government workers own a good majority of those. Nigeria is blessed with hundreds of thousands of bright, intelligent young adults and teens, but there is very little help available to develop and use this valuable resource.

Though things have gotten a little better in the last four to five years, the political leaders could do a lot more to develop the vast resources of the country and provide more opportunities for the average citizen. Millions of Nigerians live in poverty, struggling to earn their daily bread, while most of the leadership lives in compounds surrounded by high walls topped with razor-sharp barbed wire. City streets are filled with potholes and broken pavement. I saw no working traffic lights in Lagos, a city of 13.5 million people and almost as many cars, trucks, buses and motor bikes polluting the air. But it will be beautiful and wonderful place in the time of God's Kingdom! God is now calling and developing those future leaders.

We arrived in Nigeria on Thursday evening, March 21, and flew out on

April 8, spending nearly three weeks with the brethren there.

There are two congregations in Nigeria. The morning following our arrival I traveled over to Benin City for the first seven days while Fred stayed in Lagos, which has the larger congregation. We switched locations for the last part of our trip.

There is good steady growth in both congregations at the present. Benin City has about 25 in attendance and Lagos has grown from eight in 1997 to around 65 in the first months of 2002.

Passover in Benin City

I arrived in Benin City on Friday afternoon and conducted Sabbath ser-

VICES the next day after an early morning anointing of a member. The crowd was a little smaller than usual because of some sickness among the members. What they lacked in numbers, they made up in enthusiasm in the song service!

On Tuesday evening, we held the Passover in my hotel room with five men and five women present.



Bruce Gore and the Lagos, Nigeria, congregation sing hymns

For the Night to Be Much Observed, we all met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Israel Igdaliah. The evening was very nice in spite of being without electricity. In many of the cities the electricity goes off unexpectedly for several hours at a time. Joseph Forson, a former minister of WCG who is now with UCG, joined us for the evening. Everyone enjoyed good food, conversation and

Friday, Fred and I made the trip to switch locations for the last part of the Days of Unleavened Bread. By car, it takes about four to five hours to travel between Benin City and Lagos.

A Side Trip to Ibadan

After conducting Sabbath services in Lagos, we got up early on Sunday to make the trip to Ibadan. A lecture for



Good News subscribers was planned for the next day. We learned that a *Good News* subscriber was in the hospital in Ibadan and went by to visit with him. He was working as a security guard for a business when some demonstrating students from a nearby university came through the area and cut off his left arm with a machete. He stated that all he was trying to do was "earn my daily bread for my family." We left him a little financial assistance and some literature including the booklet *Why Does God Allow Suffering?*

There is a little church group in Ibadan called the Church of God, Sabbatharians. They have learned of the United Church of God and want a closer association with us. Some of the Nigerian board members have talked with them several times. There are a few things they do in their worship services that we do not feel is appropriate or necessary. For instance, they all remove their shoes when they go into their church hall and they spend all day on the Sabbath at the Church meeting place. They wanted to discuss this with us. I was asked to speak with them about why United does not practice these things in our Sabbath services.

On Monday morning, we had a breakfast meeting with six or seven members representing the group—four or five men and two women. I would guess there are probably 25 to 35 in this group. I spent over two hours with them going over these issues in addition to many other questions. Their leader told me how much they appreciate and need our literature. They are an attentive, humble people. I felt a kindred spirit in being with them. We invited them to attend our lecture that immediately followed.

We had 14 new people attend the lecture. I spoke for about 45 minutes on the subjects of a world that is spiritually

blinded and how God is calling a few now to assist Christ in teaching the world His truth at His return. We spent another hour answering a variety of questions from the group. There was a lot of interest on their part. There were several young men in attendance. One had traveled over two hours to attend the lecture. They all took a number of pieces of our literature with them.

As we were leaving the hotel, we were invited by the leader of Church of God, Sabbatharians, to stop by their hall on the way out of town where we were asked to address some of the group and pray for them. This we did.

Back in Lagos

We made the two-hour return trip to Lagos. On the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, the local congregation had invited interested *Good News* subscribers to an open house meeting there. The group of over 60 once more enjoyed a noon meal courtesy of a couple of American congregations.

Once again we had over a dozen visitors and spent a couple of hours between morning and afternoon services answering their questions. The visitors included a group from a handicapped sports team from Lagos who will travel to New York on the last weekend of April. They had heard about our church service from a man who was baptized last Feast of Tabernacles. The coach told me that he got up that Wednesday morning and "the Spirit led me strongly to feel I should go."

The Lagos congregation meets on the third floor of an apartment building. The handicapped team, including a man in a wheelchair and another with an artificial leg, toiled up three flights of stairs to sit through the service and then participate in the two hours of questions.



Newly baptized Lola Ibirogba with Fred Kellers and her mother

One question that the man in the wheelchair asked was, "Where does the Bible say that the 'lame shall leap like a deer'?" We handed him the Bible turned to the statement in Isaiah 35. You could see hope and encouragement fill his face. I was encouraged to see the depth of interest from so many of the newer people that I met in these meetings.

Following the afternoon services, a middle-aged lady and her handicapped daughter came up to me. The grown, handicapped daughter could hardly walk. She was fairly heavy. Yet those two had also struggled up those stairs to attend the afternoon services. She had seen the sports team with the wheelchair go up earlier in the day and thought

maybe there was a "healing service" taking place. She told me that she enjoyed the sermon and asked if I would pray for her severely handicapped daughter. Her daughter's name is Benedicta. I hope you will pray for her too.

Strong, Steady Growth!

On this trip, Fred baptized three young ladies, all in their 20s. This makes 27 baptized in the last two and a half years. Fifteen of those baptized, over half, are new, having never been in any Church of God previous to receiving *The Good News* or other of our material. We are bursting out of our little hall in Lagos, but we will try to stay there one more year in order to save on rental costs.

A group in Abuja, the capital, that was associated with our previous affiliation, is receiving our material and wants to develop a closer association with us. They are receiving *The Good News* and our other material and distributing it to their members. Fred gave the sermon at their services on the Sabbath after Unleavened Bread. They were very receptive and appreciative. There were over 40 in attendance. We expect to work more closely with them in the future.

Sunday, April 7, we participated in their sermonette class followed by a



Faith Aluyi was baptized by Mr. Kellers

meeting discussing site selection for the Feast of Tabernacles. They are so short on funds it is very difficult for them to afford a location that in any way represents what life in the world tomorrow will be like.

My observations of the work of God's Church in Nigeria are that there is tremendous potential for growth—a growth that in time should make it possible for the area to be self-sufficient. They desperately need their own minister in the area. I appreciated the opportunity to serve them on this trip and will



Newly baptized Rebecca Oguntayo with her parents

remember them in my prayers in the months and years to come. UN

Meeker Visits Brethren From Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Kenya and Rwanda

■ A visit to French-speaking Africa results in four baptisms and stronger bonds.

by Joel Meeker

During a two and half week African trip in March and April, I had the opportunity to visit brethren from Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Kenya and Rwanda.

I arrived in Benin, West Africa, on Sabbath morning March 23 after two days of travel from the States. Our brethren from neighboring Togo had come by road to ask the Sabbath and the Passover with the brethren from Benin. We had services that afternoon, after which I continued the baptismal counseling I had begun with several people on my previous visit.

A Visit With Family and Friends

Sunday morning Mr. Fiaboé, our deacon in Togo, Mr. Ogoudélé, our lead member in Benin, and I drove 100 miles north on sometimes poor roads to the latter's native town of Kétou. Two of his relatives and some family friends had requested a visit to ask biblical questions and to discuss baptism. We met them in the Ogoudéls' family house, one of four in a walled compound. I was proud to see that the Ogoudélé home was freshly painted and very clean inside and out, in sharp contrast to the three other dwellings that showed all the neglect and squalor often associated with poverty in the developing world. This house was used as the regional Feast of Tabernacles site in 2001, and will probably be used again this year.

The questions were quite wide-ranging since some of the people present were farther along in their understanding than others. We discussed the importance of personal Bible study, the teaching of the Bible about the Sabbath and the annual Holy Days, praying to Mary (the Catholic church is influential in this region), the state of the dead, as well as the biblical teaching about baptism, and how the Bible says we should prepare for it. The questions were sincere and the attitudes very receptive. They asked when I could next come to see them, and I said I would do my best on my next trip to Benin. Before leaving we were offered a lunch of rice, bread and fish with some spicy chili sauce. On the way back to Cotonou we stopped by the side of the road so Mr. Ogoudélé could gather some grasses and leaves. He prepares and sells herbal remedies from his home, and this was a chance to replenish his supply of some plants.

Back in Cotonou we went to the Ogoudéls' house for a special treat. I had brought along a DVD of the old movie *The Ten Commandments*, which our brethren in Benin and Togo had never seen. I set my laptop computer on a table and they watched the French language version. Everyone really enjoyed

it due to the timely nature of the story. After watching the movie, we had an interesting discussion about the accuracy of the film. Before returning to my hotel I had more personal counseling sessions with members.

Four Ocean Baptisms

Monday, I had final baptismal counseling with four people and we arranged to have the baptisms the next day at noon during the lunch break. I decided to perform the baptisms in the ocean since my



The four newly baptized members in Cotonou, Benin, are Pierrot Ogoudélé, Angele Ogoudélé, Christophe Allagbé and Odette Allagbé

efforts to secure the use of a hotel swimming pool had been unsuccessful. Since shore break can be very strong and the currents are notably dangerous along this coast, I asked everyone to pray that we would have calm conditions for the baptisms. I believe our prayers were answered since we had a sunny day and relatively calm shore break of 5 to 7 feet. To perform the baptisms we walked out into the surf and waited until a wave of the right size along. By the time we had finished, I was very nearly as wet as our four new brethren were!

The beach where the baptisms took place was near a goat and sheep market traditionally held by Muslims. It's rare for them to see a light-skinned person in this area, and even more rare to see one dipping people in the ocean, so by the time we had finished the four baptisms, a group of 20 or so curious onlookers had gathered, and several asked questions about what we were doing.

That night for the Passover we were 13 including our four new brethren, Christophe and Odette Allagbé and Pierrot and Angèle Ogoudélé. This was the first time in years that an elder had been present to celebrate the Passover with them, so this special time was a bit more special for us all this year.

On to Cameroon

The next day, Wednesday, I flew to Douala, Cameroon. There are only flights two or three times a week so there is very little choice as to when to fly. The flight was delayed several times, so I didn't finally arrive in Douala until 1 a.m. the First Day of Unleavened Bread. After a few hours of sleep we had morning services in the church house in Douala. Some members in the St. Louis, Missouri, area had sent a special offering with me to help our brethren in Africa. I

used some of the money to provide a good afternoon meal to the members gathered. We enjoyed a meal of roast chicken, white yam, cassava, red chili sauce and soft drinks and beer. Economic conditions are becoming more difficult in central Africa, so a good meal means a great deal to our brethren here.

Friday, I drove out to a field UCG has purchased to assist our brethren in Cameroon. In January I had visited the field on the outskirts of Douala with Moïse Mabout. We were looking for a way to help our brethren help themselves, without making anyone dependent on regular assistance. We decided to purchase the field in the name of the Church, and allow our brethren to farm it, raising food to feed themselves and their families. Since my visit in January the one-hectare (100 meters by 100 meters) field had been burned off and planted in maize (corn), plantain (a kind of banana) and pistachio. Beans, yams and potatoes, among other crops, will be planted as work progresses. It was about 90 degrees Fahrenheit (33 degrees Celsius) in the wilting tropical humidity when we arrived in mid-morning to see the progress. I was excited to see five members working hard on clearing the field, setting up barriers to keep the porcupines out, and planting more seed. The maize, plantain and pistachio plants

were already above ground, and I could see our brethren were excited about this opportunity to improve their situations through their own work.

Sabbath we gathered for services at 10. I spoke on why we keep Passover rather than Easter. We again made available a fine noon meal to the 30 people present. In the afternoon I held a marriage seminar, dividing everyone up into study groups and giving them a list of scriptures to consult and questions to answer about marriage. After a time of group study and discussion we compared the findings and discussed them.

A Short Visit in Kenya

Crossing two time zones, I arrived at 8:30 a.m. and took a taxi to my hotel. I met Kurt and Jennifer Hoyer for lunch. Kurt was a classmate of mine at Ambassador and now works for the U.S. State Department in the U.S. embassy in Nairobi. It was good to see them again and hear about their posting to this beautiful but sometimes challenging area of the world.

That night I had dinner with the Hoy-



A group studies passages on marriage during a marriage seminar in Douala, Cameroon (photos by Joel Meeker)

ers and with the Gichuru and Nthungu families, whom I had not seen in well over a year. I'm thankful that David Baker is now serving on behalf of UCG in this area, which allows me to concentrate more on French-speaking areas; but I do miss the opportunity to fellowship with our brethren in English-speaking Africa.

Rwandan Members Welcomed

The next morning I flew to Kigali, where I had not been since December 1998. The Church members in Rwanda had been part of United until the difficulties we faced in 1998. Their path took them through membership in several church groups culminating with the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship.



Members working in the Church field outside Douala, Cameroon

When they learned that most of the members previously with this group were now welcome members of United, our Rwandan brethren decided they wished to return as well.

Mr. Jean-Marie Mundeli, a church elder in Rwanda, met me at the airport and drove with me to the hotel where I would stay. We spent several hours discussing the situation in the Church around the world and in Rwanda in particular. We also finalized plans for the next few days.

Wednesday was the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. Through heavy rains (it's the rainy season), I made the hour-long drive up to Remera, the village where the Mundelis live, arriving around 9:30 a.m. Services would be held in their home. Shortly after 10 the members from the other Rwandan congregation arrived from the village of Giti, more than a two-hour drive from Remera. There were 43 people present for services, and we all managed to fit into the Mundelis' living room! The Giti chorale sang special music with lyrics written especially for the Feast day. As I spoke on the topic of Christian change and growth, Mr. Mundeli translated phrase by phrase from French into Kinyarwanda, the Rwandan national language, closely related to Kiswahili.

After services, while Mrs. Mundeli oversaw the final preparation of lunch, I took questions for about an hour from the members about the work and structure of UCG, as well as the prophetic implications of the Sept. 11 attacks in New York. Our brethren had a keen interest in learning more about exactly what happened and what the impact might be for the future.

We shared a fine meal of chicken, fried bananas and potatoes, green beans and matzos (which I had brought from the States.) I took some photos and then it was time to go. Due to the rain the bush taxi in which the Giti members had come had to be pushed up the slick hillside back up to the main road. When I saw the crowd of members waiting to get in the van, I asked how many were going to travel in the vehicle. I was told 19 people would. I knew this would be cramped so I asked how many of those 19 would be children. "We don't count the children," I was told. When I asked how many would be in the van including

children, I was told there would be 30! Still they are very happy to have transportation provided for them. One lady in Remera walks three hours one-way to church services, and another member two hours.

A Visit With Our Brethren in Giti

Thursday, Mr. Mundeli and I drove an hour and a half into the mountains,

Sibobugingos' home. It's constructed of mud brick, and split bamboo with a corrugated tin roof. They hope to put in a concrete floor soon. The members officially welcomed me and each family was introduced. I introduced myself as well and talked about my family and my work. I expressed to them how pleased we were in United to have them back with us as brethren, part of the same physical association,



The Giti, Rwanda, congregation in their church hall

over rocky dirt roads, to visit our brethren in Giti. Mr. Sibobugingo, the deacon in Giti, generously offered us a breakfast of omelet, rice, bananas, peanuts and a soft drink on our arrival at about 9:30. Then we met with most of the Giti members in the small church hall they have built next to the

as well as the same spiritual body. We then drove further up the mountainside out of Giti to the home of the Etienne Rutamujyane family. We left the car and hiked up a footpath for another quarter of an hour to reach the house. They are subsistence farmers on their family plot, and very faithful

members of the Church. We had a pleasant visit in their home, with Messrs Mundeli and Sibobugingo acting as translators. A copy of the Ten Commandments in Kinyarwanda and the calendar of the Holy Days in English were prominently attached to the chalked clay walls of the living room.

We visited for about an hour with Etienne and his family and two other church families that lived nearby. Then a strong wind came up and the sky grew black. The rains were going to begin. We hurried back down the path and arrived at the car just before the skies opened.

The drive back down to Kigali was exciting to say the least. The heavy rains turned the clay-dirt roads to a very slick surface. As we drove down the mountains, the car would from time to time lose all traction, sliding sideways several feet before the driver regained control. Going off the road would have meant a very fast trip to the valley below. Thankfully we stayed on the road. The driver didn't seem unduly concerned, though to me it seemed we had a number of close calls.

Before returning to Kigali we stopped to see the site used for the Feast of Tabernacles in 2001. It is a house on the shores of Lake Muhazi, a beautiful area, green and lush. The site is a bit cramped for the number of people attending, but it seems to be the best they can find. We may try to help them acquire a few tents to allow

some of the children to sleep outside during the Feast.

A Sober Reminder

In the afternoon Mr. Mundeli and I drove an hour south of Kigali on dirt roads for a sobering visit to the village of Ntarama. The Catholic church building there has been declared a genocide memorial site. During the violence against the Tutsi tribe in April of 1994, about a tenth of the Rwandan population, around a million people, was murdered at the instigation of government leaders. In the small village of Ntarama it is estimated that 5,000 Tutsis were killed, many of them in the church where they had taken refuge. Two survivors of the violence now act as caretakers and guides on the site. The man and woman,



Members from Remera and Giti, Rwanda, on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread

who lost many family members, explained to us what had happened.

Interahamwe (Hutu) militia arrived one morning and used hand grenades,

rifles, machetes and nail-studded clubs to kill the men, women and children inside. Things in the church compound and building have been left much as they were in 1994. The church is scattered with human bones, rotting clothing and personal effects dropped by the people as they were slaughtered. In a makeshift shed next to the church hundreds of skulls and leg bones are laid out in a gruesome display showing the magnitude of the killings. It was a shockingly frightening story to hear and a sobering aftermath to see. The lady concluded at the end of her explanation "I hope we have learned our lesson."

We understand from Jesus' prophecy recorded in Matthew 24:21 that things will be worse than ever before just before the second coming. Only after the return of Christ will mankind truly learn its lesson. All the more reason for us to pray "Thy kingdom come." I took some encouragement from the knowledge that in the middle of all the killings of 1994 our brethren in Rwanda, many of whom are Tutsi, were protected from the violence though they did have to flee their homes for months. Our Father does watch over His children.

The next morning I left Rwanda to begin the long trip home. I transited through Nairobi, and was able to spend additional time with our brethren there before flying out for Europe and finally home. I'd like to thank those who remember our African brethren and me personally in their prayers. Your support is very much appreciated. **UN**

East London Has a Wild Holy Day

On the First Day of Unleavened Bread, 35 brethren from the East London, South Africa, congregation cele-



brated morning and afternoon services in the Mpongo Park Game Reserve Conference Centre.

The speakers had to produce their



very best efforts to hold the attention of the audience as ostriches and a warthog attempted to gatecrash the services from time to time while a herd of impala grazed closed by.

During the luncheon interval the children were able to take turns cuddling a baby chimp and lion cubs

and touching a bristly warthog.

The 10 hippos in the adjacent dam were so moved by the singing that they attempted to join in.

The natural setting of the venue added to a wonderful first day of the festival.

Neil Becker



U.K. Good News Circulation Grows

March ended with a continuing increase in the circulation of *The Good News* in the British Isles, which is now over the 2,300 figure with 82 new subscriptions.

These were mainly received from the Internet, although there was once again a good increase from the Isle of Man, with 19 responses from the direct mail project.

We also had new subscription requests coming from the motorway

services area display stands, and also from the ads in the *British Reader's Digest*. Also, and very pleasingly, we have only received three cancellations.

The *Bible Study Course* continues to march on with 31 requests this month. The list of donors and coworkers has continued to increase, with 13 new donors and 7 new coworkers this year.

The British Isles office is contin-

uing our rolling program of renewals and 300 renewals were sent out with the March/April *Good News*. Another 1,200 are due to be sent out with the next issue.

In the Isle of Man the circulation list is now the highest it has been since last June. The same is true of several other countries among the 35 we mail to other than the United Kingdom.

British Isles office

Church in Malawi Reaches New Milestone

A new milestone was reached for the United Church of God in Malawi when the brethren gathered during the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread in Blantyre. Until then members were meeting in each others' homes, and this was the first occasion for them to hold services in a hall.

This arrangement will continue for future services, and they will be watch-

attendance, and on the First Day of Unleavened Bread 29 happy and appreciative people were present. There were another 10 meeting in the capital city, Lilongwe.

After the service Mrs. Manes Chirwa was baptized. She was 5 years of age when her parents first started attending with the Church of God, and has remained steadfast in the faith ever



The United Church of God congregation in Blantyre, Malawi

ing video sermons sent from the home office. These tapes are invaluable for our members in these remote areas who do not have a resident pastor. They expressed their appreciation to the home office for these tapes, mentioning how much they learn from the sermons.

On the Passover there were 18 in

since. Her parents, two brothers and their families also attend.

There are others in the region who were baptized into the Church of God who are expressing an interest in attending. If they do, they will be a part of a dedicated and committed group of individuals.

André van Belkum



From the Word

What in the World Was He Thinking?

■ This article poses questions that can take a lifetime to answer. But thinking about these questions is a key step in becoming like Christ.

by Clyde Kilough

It takes a terribly simplistic view of Scripture to think that Philippians 2:5 is simple. In what may superficially appear to be a rather uncomplicated statement—"let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"—lies an incredible challenge, first to truly understand, then to apply.

Furthermore, verse 5 is only the introduction to an even deeper concept that develops in verses 6-8, where we read that two of the great hallmarks of

pursuit, but it comes with great pay! The payback is that as we begin to better understand the mind of Christ, we can begin to take on the form of a Christ-like servant.

The "form of a bondservant" was not merely Jesus Christ's outward appearance—it was first and foremost His way of thinking in many aspects of life. Neither did "taking the form of a bondservant" pertain simply to performing certain acts of service.

One-dimensional thinking assumes that servant leadership is only about serving. Oh no! It is a far more complex weave of factors, such as the appropriate actions (depending on the person and circumstance), motivation, having the right purposes, methods and techniques—all of which spring from the way we think.

"Serving" and "being a servant" are not the same. Very simply put, serving

What all went on in the mind of Christ that governed His attitude and actions?

How did that relate to His servant mindset?

How does it need to work in my life?

What in the World Was He Thinking?

Let's probe a bit deeper by considering several specific realms of thinking that governed all of Christ's subsequent actions:

- How did He think about, and view, Himself?
- How did He think about, and view, other people?
- How did He think about His position, office or responsibility?
- How did He think about structuring His Church? Why did He set it up the way He did?
- How did He think about using His power, authority and controls?
- How did He think about making decisions?
- How did He think about choosing leaders?
- How did He think about developing His followers into leaders?
- How did He think about developing their opportunities to learn?
- How did He think about other people under His leadership exercising creativity and initiative?
- How did He think about His personal accountability to others, or the accountability of others to Him?
- How did He think about dealing with others when they made mistakes?
- How did He think about dealing with His own temptations?
- How did He think about, and approach, solving problems?
- How did He think about communicating with people in matters such as the flow of information to others, receiving input from others and disclosing information?
- How did He think about His expectations of those following Him?
- How did He think about measuring the results of His endeavors?

Are you mentally exhausted yet? (If you seriously studied the answer to each question before reading on to this point, you must be now living somewhere around the year 2005 or beyond!)

Fully considering these questions requires a lot of mental work—the questions are certainly easier to come up with than answers, demonstrating an important point. That is, an entire lifetime of study would not offer us sufficient opportunity to fully comprehend the way He thought in all these matters!

God engages His disciples on a lifelong quest to answer the question, "Just what is the mind of Christ and how can I more effectively let it be in me?"

"Let this mind be in you" may be grammatically a simple sentence, but even the most basic step of practicing that admonition—analyzing what all went on in His mind—requires deep investigation and meditation.

One Path Leads to Another

Furthermore, seriously pondering His thinking processes begins to mentally walk us down another path of meditation, a path we must take if we are to grow. The sign marking the entrance to that path reads: "How much is *my* thinking aligned with His thinking in all of these areas?"

Let's reconsider all of the questions previously asked from another angle—how do they relate to leadership, the mind of Christ as a servant and our comprehension of servant leadership? Once again, let's pose more questions than answers.

- Which of the preceding questions and concepts do not involve leadership and the way people are served?
- Which of those areas of life do not involve approaches that either serve God and others (Christ-like) or else are carnal and self-serving?
- What are, for each of those questions, typical worldly patterns of

thought and action versus godly patterns of thought and action?

- Which of those questions and concepts do not affect our impact on other peoples' lives?
- Which of those questions and concepts do not connect to each of us in our realms of personal leadership?

Quest for the Mind of Christ

One of the strangest and most difficult notions for humans to grasp is that the strongest possible leadership flows from being a servant. In the last couple of years in the Church we have been

searching to better understand how Christ can live in us, particularly in the area of emulating His life as a servant.

We have seen more deeply that our approach to leading other people must be centered on the concept of servanthood, which must be centered on the model of Jesus Christ, which must first be centered on thinking as He thought. The heart of godly servant leadership finds its roots in the mind of Christ, and that mind covered a very broad spectrum of issues (as illustrated in the chain of questions above) in which His thinking was molded according to the Father's. Those same issues touch our everyday lives as well.

Understanding the heart of Christ as a servant and how it pertains to both His leadership and ours is not simplistic or elementary. Nevertheless, every man, woman and child following God should—must—engage in a quest to plumb the depths of the mind of Christ, beginning with the question, "How did He think?" It is in the search and discovery process that we will find ourselves growing.

After all, how can we let the mind of Christ be in us, how can we be like-minded servants, unless we are learning how that mind works? **UN**



Henry Ford reportedly observed, "Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is why so few people engage in it!"

the mind of Jesus were His humility and His "taking the form of a bondservant." Clearly implied is the call for us to learn to walk in those steps as well.

But can anyone truly walk as a godly servant and lead as Christ did without first understanding the mind of Christ?

More Questions Than Answers

Henry Ford reportedly observed, "Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is why so few people engage in it!" The point of this article is to initiate some hard mental work, by posing more questions than answers. This is also the first in an on-going series of articles that will explore many different aspects of the heart of a servant, as reflected in the example and teachings of Christ. The intent of this article is to get us thinking about thinking—thinking about the mind of Christ.

This is hard work, truly a lifelong

is an event, something you do; being a servant is a way of being, something you are, based on the way you think. All true servants serve, but not all serving is necessarily from the pure heart of a Christ-like servant.

Thus, for inquisitive, dedicated followers of Christ, the Spirit of God continually confronts the human spirit with deeply personal, provocative questions: "Are you thinking the way He thought? Are you understanding all the aspects of taking the form of a servant?"

God engages His disciples in a lifelong quest to answer the question, Just what is the mind of Christ, and how can I more effectively let it be in me? This leads to many other questions:

Do I understand how He thought, and why?

How did His thinking affect His capacity to lead?

How did His thinking affect His manner of leading?

Coming: More Answers Than Questions!

At the U.S. regional ministerial conferences last summer, in a couple of sessions on servant leadership, the elders and wives examined at length the 17 questions posed in the bulleted points in the article. The ABC students also had a modified discussion of these same subjects in a similar series of classes in April.

In these small buzz groups, everyone searched for scriptural admonitions, biblical examples and modern instances to compare and contrast the typical human ways of thinking versus the way Christ would think.

In such an exercise we clearly

begin to see that the concept of servanthood is not some hazy theory; it has practical application in virtually every aspect of our thinking and resulting behavior. The way we think about these things shapes the way we act, approach other people and affect their lives.

All of these questions take us into some of the core issues of servant leadership, and such leadership is required of every one of us, often in multiple arenas of life.

We can take each of those questions and reframe them to apply to any of our responsibilities of leadership—as

husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, siblings, spiritual brothers and sisters, ministers, deacons, bosses, department heads, committee heads, Sabbath school teachers, camp counselors, etc.—in other words, any area of life where we influence the lives of other people.

In a future issue of *United News* we plan to print the results of the regional conference "think tanks." (Then you will see more answers than questions!) In the meantime, these questions should stimulate a lot of food for thought.

Clyde Kilough

Message to Pergamos and Thyatira: Don't Compromise

■ Christ's warning about compromise remains an important lesson for God's people today.

by David Treybig

In continuing our study of Jesus Christ's messages to His people recorded in Revelation 2 and 3, we now consider the two first-century cities of Pergamos and Thyatira. We will examine these two together because they were given the same basic message. Both had members who gave in to the same sin. The influence, or negative peer pressure, just came from different segments of society.

Pergamos, or Pergamum as it is also called, was "the chief city of Mysia, near the Caicus River in northwest Asia Minor (modern Turkey) . . . The city, situated opposite the island of Lesbos, was about 24 kilometers (15 miles) from the Aegean Sea.

"In its early history Pergamos became a city-state, then a powerful nation after Attalus I (241-197 B.C.) defeated the Gauls (Galatians). It stood as a symbol of Greek superiority over the barbarians. Great buildings were erected and a library containing over 200,000 items was established. The Egyptians, concerned with this library which rivaled their own at Alexandria, refused to ship papyrus to Pergamos. As a result, a new form of writing material, Pergamena charta, or parchment, was developed.

"In the days of Roman dominance throughout Asia Minor, Pergamos became the capital of the Roman province of Asia. In a gesture of friendship, Mark Antony gave Pergamos' library to Cleopatra; its volumes were moved to Alexandria.

"Not only was Pergamos a government center with three imperial temples, but it was also the site of the temple of Asklepios (the Greco-Roman god of medicine and healing), and the medical center where the physician Galen worked (about A.D. 160). Here also was a temple to Athena and a temple to Zeus with an altar showing Zeus defeating snake-like giants. In the Book of Revelation, John spoke of Pergamos as the place 'where Satan's throne is' (Rev. 2:13). This could be a reference to the cult of emperor worship, because Pergamos was a center where this form of loyalty was pledged to the emperor of the Roman Empire" (*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers, "Pergamos").

Another source adds, "The city was greatly addicted to idolatry, and its grove, which was one of the wonders of the place, was filled with statues and altars . . . The wealth of the Attalic princes had raised Pergamum to the rank of the first city in Asia as regards splendor. It was a sort of union of a pagan cathedral city, a university town, and a royal residence, embellished during a succession of years by kings who all had a passion for expenditure and ample means of gratifying it . . . Systematic

study of Pergamum began in 1878 after the German engineer Carl Human (now buried on the Pergamum acropolis) discovered the great altar of Zeus (believed by some to be Satan's seat, Rev. 2:13), now in East Berlin" (*New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 1988, "Pergamum").

As for religions: "There were beautiful temples to the four great gods Zeus, Dionysus, Athena and Asklepios. To the temple of the latter, invalids from all parts of Asia flocked, and there, while they were sleeping in the court, the god revealed to the priests and physicians by means of dreams the remedies which were necessary to heal their maladies. Thus opportunities of deception were numerous. There was a school of medicine in connection with the temple. Pergamos was chiefly a religious center of the province. A title which it bore was 'Thrice Neokoros,' meaning that in the city 3 temples had been built to the Roman emperors, in which the emperors were worshipped as gods. Smyrna, a rival city, was a commercial center, and as it increased in wealth, it gradually became the political center. Later, when it became the capital, Pergamos remained the religious center" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 1996, BibleSoft, "Pergamos; Pergamum").

To briefly describe Pergamos, we could call it a large governmental, religious and medical center. It represented education and government. Thyatira, by contrast, was much smaller. Made up of businesses, it was a working person's town.

Thyatira

This city was in "the province of Lydia in western Asia Minor (modern Turkey) situated on the road from Pergamos to Sardis. The city was on the southern bank of the Lycus River, a branch of the Hermus River.

"Although never a large city, Thyatira was a thriving manufacturing and commercial center during New Testament times. Archaeologists have uncovered evidence of many trade guilds and unions here. Membership in these trade guilds, necessary for financial and social success, often involved pagan customs and practices such as superstitious worship, union feasts using food sacrificed to pagan gods, and loose sexual morality.

"The Book of Revelation refers to a certain woman known as 'Jezebel' who taught and beguiled the Christians at Thyatira to conform to the paganism and sexual immorality of their surroundings (Rev. 1:11; 2:18-29). In the church in Thyatira, one of the 'seven churches which are in Asia' (Rev. 1:4), Jezebel's followers seem to have been a minority because the majority of Christians in this church are commended.

"The apostle Paul's first convert in Europe was 'a certain woman named Lydia. . . a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira' (Acts 16:14). The modern name of Thyatira is Akhisar, which means 'white castle' (*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers, "Thyatira").

Their Common Problem

Though Pergamos and Thyatira differed in many respects (large city versus small city, educational center versus business center, high society versus trade unions), the Christians in both congregations faced insidious influences to compromise their beliefs in order to fit in with the societies around them. When members gave in to these pressures, they committed the same sins: eating "things sacrificed to idols" and committing "sexual immorality" (Revelation 2:14, 20).

In order to emphasize the point that Christians must be careful not to sin through compromise, Jesus used two Old Testament examples of people who compromised God's instructions and a New Testament group that did the same. The individuals were Balaam and Jezebel; the group, the Nicolaitans.

Balaam

This Old Testament figure was "the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia" (Deuteronomy 23:4). His name, Balaam, "can mean to 'conquer the people' (Heb. Ba'al'am), which means the same as 'Nicolaitans,' and since they are mentioned together in this letter [Revelation], both groups may be closely related" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary of the New Testament*).

During the time of Moses, Balak, king of Moab, observed the Israelites' wanderings in the wilderness. After noting the destruction of several armies that

Balak. The king then sent another party of even higher officials to Balaam and offered to let Balaam set his own price for cursing Israel (verses 15-17). Balaam invited this group to spend the night while he again conferred with God.

"And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, 'If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you—that you shall do.' So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab" (verses 20-21). Sadly, Balaam didn't wait to be invited. He was so greedy for "the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter 2:15), he was willing to compromise God's explicit instructions.

In his own mind, Balaam probably reasoned that God had given him permission to go. But God was not pleased with Balaam's presumptuous action. "Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him" (verse 22).

Ironically, God allowed Balaam's donkey to see the danger, but not Balaam himself. Even though the donkey saved Balaam's life three times, Balaam became so upset with his animal that he was ready to kill her. God then allowed the donkey to speak and soon she and Balaam were in a conversation about what had transpired (verses 22-30).

"Then the LORD opened Balaam's

will turn back?" (verses 31-34).

Apparently humbled, God allowed Balaam to continue with the entourage. Though Balak then took Balaam to several vantage points from which he hoped Balaam would curse Israel, Balaam refused to do so (Numbers 22:41 to Numbers 24). Instead, as God instructed, Balaam blessed Israel.

Unfortunately, Balaam's willingness to follow God's instructions soon waned. As this account eventually concludes, Balaam once again presumptuously compromised God's instructions. Since God wouldn't allow Balaam to directly curse Israel, Balaam gave Balak advice that would lead to the same result: encourage the women of Moab to invite the Israelite men to their sacrifices to Baal-peor and the sexual immorality associated with this pagan religion. When the men of Israel sinned in this way, God punished them Himself (Numbers 25:1-3; 31:16).

The sin of Balaam was compromising God's instructions. Compromise also led some at Pergamos and Thyatira to commit the same sins as the ancient Israelites. As for their mention in Revelation 2, the *Expositor's Bible Commentary of the New Testament* says, "The combination of 'food sacrificed to idols' with 'sexual immorality' may refer to the common practice of participating in the sacrificial meal of the pagan gods (cf. 1 Cor. 10:19-22) and indulging in sexual intercourse with temple priestesses in cult prostitution.

"This is the more normal way to understand the term 'sexual immorality' in the context of the pagan gods. Some feel, however, that the term refers to spiritual unfaithfulness and apostasy from Christ (cf. Isa. 1:21; Ezek. 23:37). But the prevalence of sexual immorality in first-century pagan society makes it entirely possible that some Christians at Pergamos were still participating in the holiday festivities and saw no wrong in indulging in the 'harmless' table in the temples and the sexual excitement everyone else was enjoying (cf. 1 John 5:21)."

Jezebel

This notorious woman of the Old Testament was the Canaanite wife of Israel's King Ahab. She had not only led Ahab to worship Baal, but through her husband had promulgated her teachings of idolatry and witchcraft throughout all Israel (1 Kings 16:31-34; 2 Kings 9:22).

In addressing the church at Thyatira, Jesus used this same name to refer to a contemporary woman apparently following the example of this Old Testament queen. As the *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* explains, "In Rev. 2:20, we read of Jezebel [sic], 'the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess' . . . as Moffat (*Expositor's Greek Testament*) aptly renders, 'that Jezebel of a woman alleging herself a prophetess.'

"Some members of the church at Thyatira 'under the sway of an influential woman refused to separate from the local guilds where moral interests, though not ostensibly defied, were often



Even after being saved from death three times by his donkey, Balaam's willingness to follow God's instructions soon waned, and he returned to compromising (photo © 1999-2002 www.arttoday.com)

attacked them, Balak became concerned about this threat to his nation. He then tried to hire Balaam to curse the Israelites (Numbers 22:1-6). Because the king had observed that those Balaam blessed were blessed and those he cursed were cursed, he sent elders of Moab and Midian to Balaam with a "diviner's fee" to pay for the curse (verses 6-7).

Upon learning of Balak's offer, Balaam seemed willing to make the deal. But there was one problem—God told Balaam that he couldn't go with the elders or curse Israel (verses 7-14). After explaining that God wouldn't let him go with them, the emissaries returned to

eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face. And the Angel of the LORD said to him, 'Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before Me. The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live.' And Balaam said to the Angel of the LORD, 'I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displeases You, I

seriously compromised . . . Her lax principles or tendencies made for a connection with foreign and compromising associations which evidently exerted a dangerous influence upon some weaker Christians in the city.' Her followers 'prided themselves upon their enlightened liberalism (verse 24)'" (Electronic Database, 1996, BibleSoft, "Jezebel").

Just how did this woman beguile or seduce (Revelation 2:20) some Christians at Thyatira to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols? A number of biblical resources suggest that this first-century Jezebel's teaching was similar to that of the Balaamites and Nicolaitans. Yet hers may have centered upon knowing "the depths of Satan" (verse 24).

The *Expositor's Bible Commentary* says, "But could she lure Christians by using such a term? The reasoning of some in the early church (the Nicolaitans) might have gone something like this: The only effective way to confront Satan was to enter into his strongholds; the real nature of sin could only be learned by experience, and therefore only those who had really experienced sin could truly appreciate grace. So by experiencing the depths of paganism ('the deep secrets of Satan'),

where the teaching was leading."

Nicolaitans

Though little is known about this group, it seems to have embraced the same compromising approach as the Balaamites and followers of Jezebel. While the Ephesians recognized the Nicolaitan error (Revelation 2:6), apparently some in Pergamos and Thyatira were deceived by it.

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary says the Nicolaitans were "an early Christian heretical sect made up of followers of Nicolas, who was possibly the deacon of Acts 6:5. The group is mentioned explicitly only in Rev. 2:6, 14-15, where it is equated with a group holding 'the doctrine of Balaam,' who taught Israel 'to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.'"

"Balaam probably was responsible for the cohabitation of the men of Israel with the women of Moab (Num. 25:1-2; 31:16). Therefore, the error of this group was moral rather than doctrinal. If the 'Jezebel' of Revelation 2:20-23 was a teacher of this sect, as many believe, their sexual laxity was indeed strong. Most likely, they were a group of anti-law practitioners who supported a freedom that became self-indulgence. It may

The Spiral of Sin: David and Bathsheba

While the effects of compromise are poignantly recorded for us in Christ's messages to Pergamos and Thyatira, its insidious nature is usually not understood by its victims until it is too late and they are trapped in a spiraling escalation of sin. This type of sin is like a vortex that continually leads its prey into greater degradation with fewer and fewer opportunities for escape.

The example of David's sin with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11 is particularly insightful.

Notice how David and Bathsheba's sin began. "One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, 'Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uri-

ah the Hittite?' Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her" (2 Samuel 11:2-4, NIV).

What started as perhaps a chance observation soon grew into a full-blown sin. There is a profound lesson in this scenario: One little compromise often leads to another and another and another. Such was the case with David and Bathsheba. His initial sin of lust soon escalated into more sin. Then, in an effort to conceal one sin, David committed another.

When David learned that Bathsheba was pregnant with his child, he contrived a plan to get Bathsheba's husband, Uriah the Hittite, home from the war so he could sleep with his wife. If this plot worked, then all would assume the child Bathsheba was carrying was Uriah's. But David's plan failed. Because his fellow soldiers

were unable to be home with their wives, Uriah chose not to go home to his—even when David got him drunk (verses 6-13).

This development led David to work out a plan to have Uriah killed in battle. Unknowingly, Uriah carried his own execution order back to Joab, the commander of David's army (verses 14-17). Uriah was set in the midst of some of the fiercest fighting. Then those around him withdrew and allowed him to be killed. Now David was not only guilty of adultery, but also of murder. Like the web of a spider that ever more tightly entraps its struggling prey, David's compromises led him from one sin to another.

Such is the nature of compromise whether in David's time, with the Christians in Pergamos and Thyatira during the first century A.D. or with God's people today. **UN**

Fear

Occasionally the people of God find themselves compromising because of fear. A couple of examples from the lives of Abraham and his son, Isaac, vividly illustrate this problem.

Before Abram's and Sarai's names were changed to Abraham and Sarah, they went to Egypt because of a severe famine (Genesis 12:10). While there, Abraham asked his wife to say that she was his sister because he was afraid someone might kill him in order to have his wife (verses 11-13). In time, Pharaoh took Sarai into his house with the likely intent of making her his wife (verses 14-16). When this occurred, "the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife" (verse 17). Eventually, Pharaoh learned Sarai was Abram's wife and returned her to him (verses 18-20).

Years later, Abraham told the same story to Abimelech, king of Gerar (Genesis 20:1-2). Again, God delivered Abraham and Sarah, but this time, Abimelech asked Abraham why he had said Sarah was his sister (verses 3-10). Abraham then explained: "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my

wife. But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He is my brother"'" (verses 11-13).

Even though God had previously shown Abraham and Sarah that He would protect them, fear caused Abraham to once again employ his half-truth that Sarah was his sister. Sadly, Abraham's example also influenced Isaac. When Isaac faced a similar situation with his wife, Rebekah, he used the same explanation as his father (Genesis 26:6-11). In Isaac's case, however, it wasn't even a half-truth. It was a lie—a completely untrue statement motivated by fear.

In Revelation 21:8, Jesus Christ warns us that "the cowardly ["fearful," KJV], unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Whether motivated by fear or

not, liars will not be in the Kingdom, nor will the sexually immoral. Compromising God's instructions is not the path to eternal life.

Antidotes

One of the great antidotes to fear is the love of God. As the apostle John explains, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). When we deeply commit ourselves to God and love Him more than anything else, God will help us have the courage we need to serve Him without compromise.

And finally, there is the other great remedy to compromise that Jesus spoke of in His message to Pergamos and Thyatira. To those who had entered the dangerous waters of compromise, He simply said, "repent" (verses 16, 21). If we discover that we have compromised God's instructions, we must also change.

When King David acknowledged his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, he deeply repented before God (Psalm 51:1-12). We can do the same. Remember God's eternal message to His people: don't compromise His instructions. **UN**



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The notorious Jezebel and Ahab being rebuked by Elijah

one would better be equipped to serve Christ, or be an example of freedom to his brothers (cf. 1 Cor. 8:9-11). Thus the sin of Jezebel was deadly serious because of the depths of its deception. Only a few perceived

have been the same heresy condemned in 2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 11. Some early church leaders believed the Nicolaitans later became a gnostic sect" (Electronic database, 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers, "Nicolaitans").

Keys to Improving Our Communications

Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan was considered by many to be the "Great Communicator." Michael Deaver was director of communications for the president up until 1985, and in a recent speech he gave some insight into the reasons his boss was so effective.

Mr. Deaver mentioned that in the last 16 years the communications industry has exploded with constant information 24 hours a day. It has been said that we are bombarded with more information in one day than our grandparents received in a lifetime.

Reagan's Three Keys

President Reagan used three keys in keeping the public informed of his

plans and agenda. His first key was that you have to know who you are and what you stand for. If a person doesn't know where he (or she) stands, then the messages he speaks on become blurred and confused.

His second key was that since so much information is available, you have to focus on two or three simple messages. And then his third key was to repeat and repeat that message. You can't just say something once—the message has to be reinforced by being repeated.

In a sense, President Reagan followed some of the qualities that Jesus Christ used in communicating. Jesus knew who He was—the Son of God.

He came with a simple message: "Repent and believe the gospel." He then repeated it in many different ways, but it was the same message. His message never became cluttered or confused.

A well-known preacher by the name of Herbert Armstrong also used these simple keys in communicating. He knew that God had called him to preach the gospel as a witness. He knew that Jesus Christ was our standard, and we must walk as Christ walked. Therefore, Mr. Armstrong had a couple of simple messages: "Remember the two trees—learn to give and not get." And he stressed the need to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God. He repeated

these basic messages for decades, and never wavered in proclaiming them.

McCurry's Five Cs

During the same conference at which Michael Deaver spoke, another communicator spoke as well. Michael McCurry was former President Bill Clinton's press secretary from 1995 to 1998. He mentioned the difficulties that he had in carrying out messages from a boss who made it extremely strenuous. So, Mr. McCurry gave his "five Cs" to successful communication.

Credibility—Tell the truth. If you don't, then how can you be believed?

Candor—Be open, honest and admit error—not trying to justify everything.

Clarity—Assemble the facts and present them in a clear, concise manner.

Compassion—Avoid coming across as egocentric or "all-knowing."

Commitment—Be disciplined and stay the course to help the listener.

These five keys are important for all of us. They boil down to being humble. A person who exhibits humility will be heard and believed. How well are we doing? How much do we have to improve in our honesty and in our candor? How well are we communicating as individuals and as a Church? May we enrich and uplift our listeners as we improve our communications process!

John W. Foster

"The Most Dangerous People on Earth"

■ It seemed a shocking statement, but could it be true—about you and me?

by Aaron Dean

Twenty years ago I received a call from Mr. Upreti of the kingdom of Nepal. He said he was over the census count for population control in Nepal, and was at the airport in Los Angeles, having just landed at about 8 a.m. He said he had a seven-hour layover before going on and hoped to be able to visit with someone from our institution.

I had never met him before, but he informed me that King Birendra and Queen Ashwarya had said he should stop by Ambassador College if he were in California. Although I had met the king and queen of this small mountainous country in the Himalayas, we did not have a project in Nepal. I was surprised they would mention us to him.

Mr. Upreti said he didn't realize Los Angeles was so far from San Francisco, his final destination, but he thought he would call anyway. I imagined this was in case the royal family were to ask him if he tried to come, and he could honestly say yes. As a favor to the royal family of Nepal, I offered to come pick

him up, do a quick tour and get him back for his flight.

Real Character

When he gave me his business card, indeed it read "Director of Population Bureau." He asked many questions about Mr. Armstrong, Ambassador College and our beliefs during our drive and the tour of the campus. We had lunch in the dining hall and he spoke to some of the students. I answered every question, explaining that God was a being of character, and we must build character to be like Him.

That is what we were all about, not only learning how to earn a living, but mostly learning how to live. I explained some of our projects and how students are expected to behave when they go overseas. We do not do missionary work the way most religions do, but we did expect them to practice a godly way of life. They must be different and choose a path that was unlike that of most of the world.

Although he appreciated the beautiful campus, his interest seemed to be more about our people and teachings. He pursued questions on our beliefs much more than I had expected. He asked if our students lived up to the teachings and built the character the institution stood for.

In the afternoon, he met briefly with Mr. Armstrong, where he got a dose of "give versus get," the "two trees" and an explanation that Christianity doesn't really understand Christ and didn't do what Christ taught. Mr. Armstrong told him that peace would come, at Christ's return, but that meanwhile we should try to do all we can.

I made the drive back to the airport where I let him off in front of his terminal. He thanked me for such hospitality on a moment's notice, and said good-bye. It crossed my mind as a bit unusual that he had such a long layover, since there are hourly flights between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Who He Really Was

It was more than a year later that I learned who this man really was. Although he may have held the title his card said, he was actually the head of the Nepalese secret service. It was not as much of an unplanned trip as I was led to believe. What was fascinating to me was his report back to the royal family, as related by a friend in the country who was close to the royal family. He informed them that "these people are the most dangerous people on earth."

This may seem startling, since we didn't seem that dangerous. What was more surprising was his follow-up statement.

"You should send the crown prince to Ambassador College for training."

At first these two statements would seem contradictory. But in reality they were not. You see, what he saw that he considered dangerous was not anything physical, but something spiritual. Unlike what he had seen of many missionaries, he said, "These people actually practice what they teach." They really do expect to build character and to practice moral values. Nearly all others give the talk, but few have ever been found to practice what they preach. He felt the crown prince would be well served to build character.

The prince never did come to Ambassador, but we did for a while have a project in Nepal. I was pleased to see the queen put us at the very entrance to the multi-acre, walled-in complex where the royals set up the projects for their country. Every person visiting the complex had to walk through our project to get to the other ones. They did this on purpose, as they wanted their people exposed to our young people.

Are We Really That "Dangerous"?

Are we really that "dangerous"? If you consider the analogies of Jesus, in which the Kingdom grows from tiny seeds to envelop the whole universe, then we real-

ly are. Indeed we are an "embryonic" or "seed" form of the Kingdom of God. And yes, we are dangerous.

That is why Satan would like to destroy the Church. We are dangerous to his plans and to his selfish, greedy, polluted way of life. We are the people who will be examples and teachers to the rest of the world.

We are, as the Bible puts it, the first-fruits of the Kingdom of God, joining our elder brother Jesus Christ. That is what Pentecost is all about. It is about us "dangerous" people.

One day all the crown princes will be exposed to and taught God's ways, His thoughts and values. All humanity will be given the knowledge of God through His calling and have the opportunity to build godly character living His way.

I will be curious to see if Mr. Upreti will be surprised at the resurrection to find that indeed, not only the crown prince, but he and all his countrymen will be taught by us. His recommendation will be heard by all. Everyone will know what we know.

Indeed they will have a chance to learn what we "dangerous" people know, and they will be most happy for it. Keep learning how to be "dangerous," because soon you will be teaching the world. **UN**

"GCE," continued from page 10

ing two horses at one time: Humble and Bold. First we have to mount Humble.

Mr. Berendt gave several biblical examples of the interplay of humility and boldness. Job was chosen by God, but God allowed Satan to test him. Job 42:5-6 shows that Job learned humility and then was given the opportunity to be bold in praying for his friends.

Mr. Berendt pointed out that humble means low or modest—but not being a doormat, not saying "I'm dumb" when you are smart. We need to recognize what we are before God. God deserves perfect servants, so we need to pray daily that God will forgive our lacks. We can never boast before God.

Yet God expects us to be bold and daring, acting with confidence in our service to Him.

Mr. Berendt said it's astonishing that we can enter the holiest, and not just once a year (Hebrews 10:19). We are a team. The ministry is called to be lights to the lights—an awesome responsibility. When a minister falls, it hurts a lot of

people. He encouraged the audience to study the stories in the Bible and avoid the pitfalls.

"Preaching, Teaching and Equipping for Service"

In his session, Dave Johnson taught the elders principles and practices of effective teaching. He pointed out that preaching and teaching are not identical tasks, and they require different skills.

He showed that the Greek words translated as "preach" or related words are used nearly 130 times in the New Testament, and preaching should occupy an important place for the ministry. Interestingly the Greek words for "teaching" and related words are used more than 230 times! Also, 46 times Christ was called Master, which means teacher. He set the example for His servants in His own teachings, for example, in the questions He asked. For someone who had all the answers, Jesus sure asked a lot of questions!

Educators have learned that people learn in three fundamental areas, ideas, attitudes and actions.

Mr. Johnson also asked, "How well do I know what I know?" He used this to show that we understand intellectual knowledge at different levels, and he also showed how different kinds of questions can help students deepen their levels of understanding. He outlined six levels of understanding.

What level of understanding does a Christian need? Memorization or just understanding the facts is not enough. Our goal is spiritual growth, not preparing members for a Bible trivia contest. We have transformational knowledge that must be presented in a transformational way.

Mr. Johnson also addressed the affective area of learning—how we internalize information. We choose the Christian life because we believe it is the right way. This heart knowledge includes appropriate emotions. Mr. Johnson pointed out that a presentation with no emotion can be dull and flat (while overt emotionalism can be embarrassing).

Mr. Johnson then addressed the psychomotor domain, the action step. Once someone knows the material and is

excited about it, what do they do? Adults want to know how they can apply the material they learn in the real world.

Mr. Johnson said that learning is interesting, but memorization is boring. He encouraged the elders to dig deeper into the subject of education and apply it in planning and delivering sermons as they grow in being effective teachers. This presentation was also followed by six breakout sessions for discussion of the material.

Final Remarks

Roy Holladay ended the conference with words of encouragement to the elders. We're all heading for God's Kingdom, he said, and we're here to be the helpers of the members' joy.

If there is one thing God's people are looking for in a minister, it is that he cares for them (Philippians 2:19). Timothy was a good example. Caring for the members includes giving thought to them.

Mr. Holladay said he often goes back to Psalm 23 since ministers are called to be shepherds. Jesus Christ cares for us (1

Peter 5:7)! We are to follow that example.

What can pastors do? Mr. Holladay gave the following steps.

- First, be praying for those God gives us (James 5:14).
- Spend time with the flock. A shepherd doesn't just visit a couple of times a month. One of the responsibilities of a minister is to visit, and not just in an emergency.
- Nourish and cherish the Church (Ephesians 5:25, 28). In 1 Thessalonians 2:7 Paul compares this with the warm, loving bond between a mother and her nursing child.
- Encourage the members (1 Thessalonians 5:11). The picture is not of someone cheering from the sidelines, but someone right there in the race with them, saying, "We can do it!" Mark Twain said, "I can live off a good compliment for a week." Don't dote compliments out sparingly.

Mr. Holladay concluded his talk by saying that one of the things that will sustain a congregation is to know that their pastor cares for them.

Mike Bennett and Don Hooser

"Candidate," continued from page 1

the United States). Next will come a three- to seven-day retreat/seminar. These retreats will be scheduled on an annual basis. Candidates would be selected from this group.

Those without Ambassador College or Ambassador Bible Center training would come to ABC. After that, the chosen candidates would enter a mentoring program under a

pastor in a congregation for 12 months.

Mr. Giese also mentioned a number of other points. Undergraduate degrees would be required of candidates. He reminded the elders that the application deadline is May 22. He explained that we hope to move forward with setting up the first retreat this year. He mentioned that there are no guarantees offered to potential candidates. Those who aren't chosen will still have gained valuable leader-

ship training in the process, and the desire is that they will part as friends.

The team also has discussed developing an "enhanced ABC" program with specialized classes on Sundays.

Mr. Giese pointed the elders to relevant verses in 2 Timothy 2:2, Matthew 9:38 and Romans 10:14-15.

In a question-and-answer session, several points were made. In the first year of the program, the focus will be on the current local elders, since we

have several open church areas without a pastor to place there. Longer term, the team hopes the program will also bring in younger men.

The program will involve the wives in the process, possibly with some specialized classes as part of the enhanced ABC program.

Can the training be conducted in local areas so those with good jobs don't have to give them up without a guarantee? Mr. Giese pointed out that the Church realizes the high level of

commitment required, but must maintain the educational requirements. Mr. Giese said that on-site training is vital, allowing interaction like most pastors had at Ambassador College, and that it really is not possible to teach these types of things by correspondence course.

Mr. Holladay pointed out that candidates will have a furnished apartment and will work part-time in the home office, receiving a partial salary while at ABC. **UN**



Local Church Updates

Young Adults Enjoy Texas Hospitality

Presidents' Day weekend, Feb. 15 to 18, was the time to be in Texas. The Dallas congregation young adults hosted a jam-packed, fun-filled weekend, Texas Hospitality 2002: Moving Beyond the Status Quo.

The Dallas congregation is blessed to have one of the largest concentrations of young adults, approximately 80, many of them former Ambassador students. We had 150 guests from around the nation and some from out of the country even as far away as South Africa. For many visitors it was a won-

derful reunion, and for all a connection to people with like minds. The weekend kicked off Friday night with a welcoming reception. Saturday morning began with a brunch at 9:15 followed by Bible seminars. At 9:30 Ken Giese opened the day with a welcoming orientation: "Realizing Your Full Potential." The next two hours were split into four inspiring seminars. Britt Taylor addressed the question: "What Is Success?" Across the hall Doug Horchak presented the topic: "Good, but Good Enough?" Mr. Giese made us look at our roles in the Church with "Service: How Do You Measure Up?" And Jim Franks asked: "What Is Integrity?" Sabbath services were held in the hotel with inspiring split sermons by Larry Salyer and Roy Holladay.

Monday morning there was a tour of Dallas for those who could stay. The group visited Reunion Tower, Dealey Plaza, the site of President John F. Kennedy's assassination, and ended in the West End Historic District, a 20-block renovated section of Dallas. It was a spiritually and physically motivating weekend! Mr. Giese and Mr. Horchak enjoyed the weekend so much that they are considering making this an annual regional event.



Ken Giese presents seminar at Texas Hospitality 2002

derful reunion, and for all a connection to people with like minds.

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Evening activities were held in the clubhouse of an apartment complex in downtown Dallas with spectacular views of the skyline. The local young adults provided a potluck dinner. Everyone had a great time playing pool, basketball, board games, watching the Olympics and most of all socializing.

Sunday morning got off with a bang when Mike Moore delivered a keynote address during brunch. The focus this day was on leadership, career management, growth and living life to its fullest potential, thus "Moving Beyond the Status Quo."

Our guest speakers were Mr. Moore

Eau Claire and St. Paul Help Spread the Gospel

The Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and St. Paul, Minnesota, congregations have been involved in a service project for the past year which has provided the



St. Paul youth get involved in mailing project

brethren a hands-on opportunity to spread the gospel. All those who



Eau Claire congregation helps send tapes to Bible Study Course grads

have completed the Bible Study Course are offered monthly audiotapes of a fundamental doctrine sermon and a radio broadcast. This helps to further their biblical education as well as continue their involvement with the Church.

Wanting to be actively involved in the work of spreading the gospel, the St. Paul and Eau Claire congregations volunteered to help with the mailing of the tapes. Consequently, once a month everyone (youth and adults alike) spends an hour or so after services putting tapes into mailing envelopes. This has saved the work thousands of dollars and has drawn the congregations together by providing lots of fun and fellowship. Most importantly, it has given everyone a lift knowing they are contributing to the work and seeing the thousands of requested tapes going out to people.

Linda F. Knapp

Akron Teen Speech Club Helps Philippine Youth

In the months of October, November and December, the Akron Teen Speech Club sold Bible calendars for a fundraiser for the Philippine Youth Camp. An article about LifeNets, a nonprofit organization founded in part by Victor Kubik, in the June 2001 issue of *United News* started the club thinking about doing things for others, instead of just enjoying ourselves.

Speech Club does many fun activities to serve the teens involved, but this past year we realized that up until that point, we had only done activities to serve ourselves. Taking Paul's admonition found in Galatians 6:10 "...let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith," we set out to find a service project.

The subject was brought up in the July meeting of our speech club, and we began to think of some ideas. Mr. Kubik was contacted by e-mail, to see who or how we might be able to serve. Mr. Kubik suggested that we raise money for the United Youth Camp in the Philippines. By the time we decid-

ed on whom to help and how, the Feast was creeping nearer. We decided to sell calendars produced by Youth Group Promotions. The calendar has 13 scenic pictures on it and a scripture verse for each month.

The calendars were ordered just before most people left for the Feast, and were received before the October club meeting when the calendars were passed out. We sold 175 calendars and made a profit of around \$500. The calendars sold well, even to those not a part of the Church. We hope to help LifeNets in the future, and perhaps inspire others to help as well.

Mary Miller

Charlotte Youth Serve for Spring Holy Days

The Charlotte, North Carolina, youth played an active part in the Spring Holy Days this year. On the Night to Be Much Observed the young people, ages 5 through 20, presented a narrative written by church member Betty Bost, outlining the significance of each of the seven Holy Days.

On the First Day of Unleavened Bread the younger children of the con-



Charlotte, North Carolina, youth sing during Unleavened Bread

gregation sang for special music, under the direction of parent Katherine Crawford. The children's group consisted of Calum Powers, Heidi Braun, Keenan and Brittaney Crawford, Laura Hudson and Elauna Pettigrew.

An instrumental ensemble of Charlotte and Asheboro teens and young adults performed offertory music on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, accompanied by Asheboro member Inez Burrow. It was inspiring to see the youth in God's Church serving in these ways.

Marti Springer

Fort Worth Hosts Basketball and Bible Millionaire

The Fort Worth, Texas, congregation hosted an invitational basketball tournament the weekend of March 9 and 10. This end-of-the-season tournament

for the teens was attended by eight congregations from Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. Mark Welch, pastor of the Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Lawton, Oklahoma, congregations, gave a special "youth" sermon. A teen dance was held Saturday night, followed by basketball games the next day.

The highlight of the weekend was the Bible question-and-answer session, Bible Millionaire, named after the popular television game show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. The book of Daniel provided the theme from which all the questions were taken. Several members of the Fort Worth congregation put on a technical "extravaganza," with computers, cameras, lights and music all thrown into the mix.

Each team of five players took turns answering questions from Daniel that became increasingly difficult until they either missed a question, or reached the \$1 million level. The final team from Ruston, Louisiana, went all the way to answer correctly the \$1 million question, winning the tournament. They barely edged out the Dallas team who reached the \$500,000 level.

It was exciting and very rewarding to see the teens do so well in a book that is a testimony to how God directs the forces of history, assuring us He will one day set up His Kingdom that will never be destroyed.

Tim and Michelle Rickard

Tampa and Ocala Hold Celebration of Long Life Luncheons

On March 2 and March 9, respectively, the Tampa and Ocala, Florida, churches presented two elegant luncheons to honor their senior citizens, 60 years and older for Tampa, and 70 years and older for Ocala. Tablecloths and floral arrangements adorned the tables, and in Ocala, sparkling grape juice shimmered in stemmed glasses. In Tampa, two door prizes were awarded. There were 36 seniors honored in Tampa, and 14 seniors honored in Ocala.

Mr. Don Waterhouse, pastor of the Tampa and Ocala congregations, gave a short Bible study on the attributes of aging. He showed how the Bible admonishes younger people to "honor the hoary head," and respect the wisdom and experience that comes from living three score, or longer, years. Having so many elderly members in these two congregations gives them great depth and a wide range of experience from which to seek counsel.

God's people are very grateful to be blessed with such a rich source of wisdom, and these two churches were glad to be able to present these luncheons to the senior citizens so they would have a small idea of how much they are valued in God's Church.

Janet Hendershot

Los Angeles Member Turns 99

A special lady in our midst, Delores Dennis, turned 99 on April 21. The blessings of long life, family, brethren and most of all God's Spirit have been gifts bestowed on Mrs. Dennis, a mem-



Delores Dennis, a member of the Los Angeles, California, congregation, turned 99 April 21

ber of the Los Angeles, California, congregation of the United Church of God.

Mrs. Dennis has many achievements and experiences to share with her church family, who also consider her "grandma," "mother" and "sister." She has written a book of poetry and many musical compositions, one of which

was sung by the original Ambassador Chorale, "Hear, O Israel." The Stamps Music Company in Texas wanted to publish her works, and she always regretted that she didn't.

From Arkansas where she was born, Mrs. Dennis moved to Texas. There she married her husband, Tom, and raised their four children, Anita, Al, Margery and Norma. She started listening to Mr. Armstrong in 1945 and was baptized in the spring of 1949. After the death of her husband, she moved to Pasadena where she worked for 12 years as the assistant to Mrs. Annie Mann in the housekeeping department of Ambassador College. Each year Mrs. Dennis and Mrs. Mann hand-ironed 19 crisp white tablecloths for the Passover services.

After retirement, Mrs. Dennis took classes in art instruction at Pasadena City College. Her artistic talent has shown itself in the over 700 oil paintings she has done. To this day she continues to use her eyes and hands creating such items as beautiful doilies which she enjoys giving as gifts.

The highlight of her week is attending church on the Sabbath where she enjoys catching up with her friends. Her favorite verse is Exodus 15:26. "It works," she says, and it always reminds her that God is with us. She says she's still alive by God's mercy, and because she eats right, keeps God's dietary laws and His Ten Commandments.

Mrs. Dennis is loved by all and a

constant example of a godly woman to her family and brethren.

Oakland Honors Couple Married 60 Years

On Feb. 23, 2002, the Oakland, California, congregation honored George



Martha and George Saito, who recently observed their 60th anniversary, are pictured here with Oakland pastor Jim Tuck

and Martha Saito. George had just turned 90, and the couple had also recently observed their 60th wedding anniversary. The Saitos are avid gardeners and love to share their harvests with the brethren. The Saitos have been an example to all in the area for many years.

Tom Meece

Eau Claire Honors 102-Year-Old Member

Margaret Kohl, who turned 102 on Feb. 11, was honored by family, friends and the Eau Claire congregation with a delicious chili luncheon after services, Feb. 16. The festivities took place at the Clairemont Nursing Home where Margaret now resides. The brethren surprised her with a "card shower," and she



Margaret Kohl, 102, with her daughter and son-in-law, Phyllis and Jim Newton

thoroughly enjoyed reading ever one. Margaret was baptized in June 1981 by Mike Hanisko in Milwaukee and was able to attend services until 1997. She was delighted to be with her "church family" and wasn't even tired by the end of the festivities!

Linda F. Knapp

Miami Youth Achieve in Spelling Bees

Miami Park Elementary School in Miami, Florida, held its 2002 spelling bee Jan. 16 for kindergarten and first grade. Emory Mongbeh came away the champion after a lengthy back-and-forth competition with one of his classmates and after having exhausted all the spelling words for first graders and making it necessary to use second grade words. In 2001, Emory was the kindergarten spelling bee champion.

Jan. 18 the fourth and fifth grades spelling bee was held, and Seth Mongbeh came away first runner-up, also after a lengthy back-and-forth competition with one of his classmates (and after spelling words not listed on their practice lists).

Seth and Emory are the sons of Radcliffe A.B. and Faye (Turnquist) Mongbeh of the Miami, Florida, congregation.

Faye Mongbeh

Preteen Regional Summer Camps Announced for 2002

by Dave Myers

The United Church of God has, since its inception, developed a strong tradition of providing camp experiences for our youth. The Church has appreciated the need for young people to get together to have fun, meet peers and connect with God and the work of the Church.

Since camp provides an ideal environment to teach the way of God, several congregations across the United States sponsor camps for preteens. These camps provide experiences that help to build an emotional bond to God, the Church and the family. They are great, wholesome fun! Preteen camps also build very positive relationships between Church members who volunteer and work together for the good of our children.

Following is a current listing of camps approved by Ministerial Services for the summer of 2002. If you would like to have your child participate, or if you would like to serve on the staff, please contact the individuals listed under each camp. We've listed them from east to west across the United States. Information about each camp can also be found on the Web at www.ucgyouth.org/preteen.

Northeast Region Preteen Camp, July 14 to 17

The Lewistown Preteen Camp, for campers ages 5 to 12, is located near Lewistown, Pennsylvania, and will be

directed by Scott and Renita Brummett. This year's scheduled activities will include campfires, Bible learning, crafts, Bible play, sports, hiking, swimming, fishing and a hayride (pulled by a team of horses).

Our theme this year is "The Exodus and the Ten Commandments," and many of our crafts and activities will emphasize this theme, especially the Bible learning, crafts and fireside chats. We thought this would be a fun way of bringing the Bible to life at a level that our campers will understand, enjoy and appreciate. On the last day, the campers will put on a play depicting this year's camp theme.

Please apply as soon as possible to help us with planning to better serve our beloved preteens. Contact: Renita Brummett, RD #1 Box 452-H, Port Trevorton, PA 17864; phone: (570) 374-5076; e-mail: renita@evenlink.com.

Great Lakes Region Preteen Camp, July 28 to 31

Camp Buckeye, for campers ages 6 to 12, is located near Beach City, Ohio, and will be directed by Dave and Pam Myers. Camp Buckeye, a new location for our seventh United preteen camp in northern Ohio, will feature activities such as Christian Living classes, swimming (in a real pool!), arts and crafts, leather work, soccer, kickball, fishing, campfires, talent show, canoeing, a river walk through a waterfall, sing-along (can you yodel?) and more. You won't want to miss it!

Contact: Dave and Pam Myers, 3878 Hile Road, Stow, OH 44224-4221; phone: (330) 686-5881; e-mail: dave_myers@ucg.org. Applications and information are also on-line at www.ucgakron.org on the AYouth@page.

North Central Region Preteen Camp, Aug. 11 to 14

Camp Ironwood Springs, for campers ages 6 to 12, is located near Rochester, Minnesota, and will be directed by Steve and Kathe Myers. Camp Ironwood Springs takes place in a spectacular outdoor setting in southeastern Minnesota. Our camp will offer a variety of children's activities that includes Christian Living, horseback riding, crafts, field games, court games, swimming, hiking/exploring, obstacle courses, music, wagon rides, campfires, sing-alongs and novelty Olympics.

Considering the ages of the youth at the camp, parents are encouraged to volunteer as staff. Hardworking, caring volunteers are encouraged to apply. If you and your children are looking for an exciting camp experience with other young people from the Church, Camp Ironwood is for you! Fill out an application and return it immediately. The application deadline is June 25, 2002. Special family pricing is also available.

Contact: Steve and Kathe Myers, 5311 Kensington Lane NW, Rochester, MN 55901; phone: (800) 550-4324; e-

mail: kathemyers@surfbest.net. Applications and information are also at www.ucg-calm.org/preteen_camp.htm.

Central Region Preteen Camp, July 8 to 11

Camp Galilee, for campers ages 6 to 12, is located on beautiful Bull Shoals Lake near Lead Hill, Arkansas, and will be directed by Michael Blackwell. The facility is air-conditioned. We run a structured camp which features activities including Christian Living, boating and canoeing, swimming, field games, arts and crafts, fishing, nature hiking and camping skills (including setting up camp and campfire building). We have a trained, enthusiastic staff waiting to serve you. Come join in the fun!

Contact: Mike Blackwell, P.O. Box 4045, Springfield, MO 65808; phone: (417) 886-8204; e-mail: michael_blackwell@ucg.org.

Houston Region Preteen Camp, June 2 to 5

The Houston Region Preteen Camp, for campers ages 7 to 12, is located near New Caney, Texas, and will be directed by Ken Giese and De Lynn Buchanan. This is our sixth year for the Houston Regional Preteen Camp. Campers will participate in coed activities such as fishing, swimming, Christian education, arts and crafts, music and recreation.

The dorms are air-conditioned and the ranch has plenty of shade to pro-

tect our campers from the sun. Our creative staff is working hard to bring many fun and exciting games and activities to the camp. We have so much fun at camp. Won't you come and join us?

For applications, contact: Camp Registrar Sharon Haughee, 12526 Campsite Trail, Cypress, TX 77429; phone: (281) 955-7996; e-mail: bohaugh@aol.com. Applications and information are also on-line at www.ucg-houston.org/memberpage. Applications must be postmarked by May 20 (extended for *United News* readers). For questions regarding the camp, contact De Lynn Buchanan, 20406 Perryoak, Humble, TX 77346; phone: (281) 852-8179; e-mail: elbuch@aol.com.

Northwest Region Preteen Camp, Aug. 4 to 7

Camp Davidson Preteen Camp, for campers ages 7 to 10, is located in a beautiful location in the Northwest, near the city of Sisters, Oregon, and will be directed by John Cafourek. Some of the planned activities will be swimming, paddleboats, court games, arts and crafts, hiking, low ropes course, music and Christian Living classes. This will be our first year for a preteen camp in the Northwest, and it promises to be a great experience.

Contact: John Cafourek, 8103 Parkridge Dr. SE, Olympia, WA 98501-5878; phone: (360) 705-4607; e-mail: john_cafourek@ucg.org. UN

Announcements

Births

David and Debbie (Roemer) Bensinger of Pasadena, California, joyfully announce the birth of their first child, Noam David, on Sept. 29, 2001. Noam weighed 10 pounds 3 ounces and measured 24 inches long. Earl and



Noam David Bensinger

Carol Roemer of Boise, Idaho, are thrilled to finally be grandparents. Grandparents Rose and Carl Peck of Elsie, Michigan, and Robert and Joan Bensinger of Deland, Florida, welcome him to their fold.

Malcolm and Cassidi (Chapman) Murray of the Flint, Michigan, congregation are pleased to announce the birth of their third child, Wyatt Brennan. Wyatt was born Feb. 15, 2002, weighing 8 pounds 5 ounces and measuring



Wyatt Brennan Murray

21 inches. Michael, age 3, and Samantha, 18 months, are delighted with their new little brother. Proud grandparents are Malcolm Sr. and Francie Murray and Chris and Andi Chapman, all members of the Flint congregation.

Jeffrey and Cheryl Davis of Clearwater, Florida, announce the birth of their first child, Jeffrey Adam Davis II. He was born on Aug. 14, 2001, and weighed 8 pounds 7 ounces and was 19 1/2 inches long. The proud grandpar-



Jeffrey Adam Davis II

ents are Dalton and Tammy Davis and Ron and Carol Lang.

Charles and Elizabeth Helwig of Belleville, Illinois, are pleased to announce the birth of their third child,



Noah Nathaniel Helwig and big brother Gabriel

Noah Nathaniel. Noah was born May 16, 2001. He weighed 9 pounds 2 ounces and was 22 inches long. Big sister Madelyn and big brother Gabriel are very delighted. The proud grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Charles Helwig Sr. of Rockford, Illinois.

Justin and Deba Adkins of Wentzville, Missouri, are thrilled to announce the safe arrival of the newest member of their family. Ronan Elliot



Ronan Elliot Adkins

Adkins was born May 12, 2001, weighing 9 pounds 7 ounces and was 21 1/4 inches long. Ronan arrived the day after Mom and Dad's anniversary and the day before Mother's Day. He is the answer to many prayers and is a special blessing and gift from God after four miscarriages. Ronan was warmly welcomed by his siblings, Aaron (12), Katie (10) and Ethan (6). His proud grandparents are Flavious and Evelyn Adkins of Troy, Missouri, and Bill and Ramona Middleton of Miami, Oklahoma.

Ron and Sally Berkey of Dayton, Oregon, are happy to announce the birth of their son Paul McCartney Berkey. He was born one month early on July 10, 2001, weighing 8 pounds



Paul McCartney Berkey

and was 20 inches long. His proud sisters are Heather (15) and Tia (11). Grandparents are Dan and Ruth Oliver of Amity, Oregon; Arlen Berkey of McMinnville, Oregon; and Evelyn Cisneros of Salem, Oregon.

Ashley RaeLynn McManis, daughter of James and Cindy McManis of Queen Creek, Arizona, was born Feb.



Ashley RaeLynn McManis

11, 2002. She was 6 pounds 4 ounces and was 19 inches long.

Engagement

Mr. and Mrs. Errol McIntosh of Lethbridge, Alberta, and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Pinelli of Cincinnati, Ohio, are pleased to announce the engagement of their children, Debbie and Jon. A late summer wedding is planned.

Weddings

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Jahns of Salt Lake City, Utah, and Arlene Burnett of Arlington, Texas, and William Cooksey of Fayetteville, Arkansas, are excited to announce the wedding of their children, Rachael Anne Jahns and Preston Scott Cooksey. The wedding took place in Bountiful, Utah, on March 2, 2002. The matron of honor was Rachael's sister, Laura Jensen. The bride's other attendants were Cheryl Marcum, Kathryn Davidson and Tere-



Rachael and Preston Cooksey

sa Jarvis. The best man was Preston's best friend, Mike Lindenberg. The groom's other attendants were David Whitlark, Michael Whitlark and Eric Flavin. Bill Jahns (father of the bride) performed the ceremony.

Preston and Rachael live in Northborough, Massachusetts. Photos of

the ceremony are available at www.prcooksey.com.

William and Jeannette Bradford and Bruce and Melissa Rivers are happy to announce the marriage of their children, Jenean Rochelle Bradford and Joseph D. Rivers. Jenean and Joe were married July 29, 2001, at the Salish Lodge, Snoqualmie Falls, Washington. The ceremony was performed by the father of the bride in an outdoor setting overlooking the waterfalls.

Jenean was attended by Leanne Holladay, Joanna Bradford and Jenny Bradford, and Joe's groomsmen were



Jenean and Joe Rivers

Greg Pennington, Brian Haas and Randall Bradford. The couple reside in Bellevue, Washington.

Anniversary

On Jan. 12, 2002, Grace and Manfred Warren were honored in the celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary. Mr. and Mrs. Warren attend the



Manfred and Grace Warren

Loveland, Colorado, congregation. Following services on Jan. 12, the Loveland, Denver and Colorado Springs congregations combined to honor them and present them with a cake, flowers, commemorative plate and gift certificates for dinner at their favorite restaurants.

Mr. and Mrs. Warren were married in Fallsville, Arkansas, at the age of 18. They had seven children; however, one died shortly after birth. Today they are blessed with 13 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren. They were baptized together in April 1984 in Fort Collins, Colorado, by Chuck Zimmerman. Their son Ken is baptized and attends in Loveland also.

When asked what lessons they have

learned to help others make a successful marriage, Grace said "perseverance, compromise and most of all, love."

Obituaries

Terry Moore, 60, a member of the Charlotte, North Carolina, congregation, died in his home on March 5, 2002. He had battled cancer for several years, including several operations. Terry was able to continue attending church services until the first of this year; he was especially happy to be able to attend the Feast of Tabernacles in Gatlinburg last fall. He is survived by Barbara, his wife of over 34 years, and by two children, Jaime and Terrell. A graveside service was held on March 7, with many family members and friends present.

William Ash, a member of the Stockton, California, congregation, died from complications of an ongoing heart condition on Feb. 12, 2002. Mr. Ash, a quiet and well-beloved man, was a member of the United Church of God since 1998. He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Laverne; goddaughter, Stacy Anderson (and her two children); one brother; and one sister. Funeral services were conducted by Clyde Kilough, pastor of the Sacramento and Stockton congregations. William, a veteran of the U.S. Navy, was buried in the San Joaquin National Cemetery with full military honors.

William Jones, 41, was found in his apartment on Nov. 19, 2001. He suffered a heart attack, triggered evidently by high blood pressure, according to the medical reports. William was a member of God's Church since 1979. While attending the New York City, New York, congregation, he served as the tape librarian and provided a ride to services for several members each Sabbath. He set an excellent example of dedication, sincerity, commitment and outgoing concern. He always looked for the best in others.

William worked as a motorman driving a subway train for the NYC Tran-



William Jones

sit Authority, where he worked for 20 years. He is survived by his mother and brother. The funeral was conducted on Nov. 26 by Kevin Epps in Brooklyn, New York.

Rachael Hendrickson, 68, died in an automobile accident on Dec. 6, 2001. She was born Nov. 4, 1933, and was baptized in the early 1960s. She traveled widely, visiting most international Feast sites including China in 1986. Mrs. Hendrickson was a widow much loved in the Collinsville, Illinois, congregation and she will be sorely missed. The funeral was conducted by Larry W. Greider, pastor.

Louise Wantlin, 79, a member of the New Orleans, Louisiana, congregation, died March 18, 2002, after battling cancer for some time. She was a kind lady who loved plants and flowers and had been unable to attend for the past couple of years due to increased pain in her knees and the onset of Alzheimer's. She is survived by five children, 15 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren, many of whom live in the southern Louisiana area. The funeral was performed by Ken Treybig March 20 in Thibodaux, Louisiana.

Paul M. Lujan, a longtime member of the Sacramento, California, congregation, died on March 18, 2002, at the age of 73. Mr. Lujan is survived by Sandra, his wife of 33 years, two children and 10 grandchildren. His funeral service was conducted by Clyde Kiloough, pastor of the Sacramento congregation.

Ena Sanner, 89, died Feb. 19, 2002. She was one of the pioneers of the Church of God, attending since 1954. She was born in Fayette, Alabama, on May 2, 1912. She was one of eight children born to Joe and Donnie Tierce. She moved to Oregon in 1942, living



Ena Sanner

in Jefferson, Salem, Independence and Dallas.

She is survived by three sisters, one brother and four children: Becky from Minnesota and Lonnie, Jack and Barbara, all from Oregon. She had 15 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. Her husband, Maurice Sanner, two sisters and one brother preceded her in death.

Arthur Burton, 81, of the Williamsburg, Virginia, congregation died Feb. 13, 2002. He served four and a half years in the army during World War II. He is survived by his wife of 41 years,

Mary; five stepchildren, John, Carroll, Mary, McArthur and Leon; one sister, Julia Harris; 25 step-grandchildren; and many step-great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held in Ashland, Virginia, by the pastor of the Williamsburg congregation, Todd Carey. Interment was in the Virginia Veterans Cemetery at Amelia, Virginia.

Paul Earls, 65, a longtime coworker and a baptized member since Oct. 28, 2001, died Dec. 22, 2001. He attended the Chattanooga, Tennessee, congregation. He is survived by his wife, Linda, who attends in Chattanooga; a son, Clark, who attends in Nashville; two daughters; his parents; a sister; two nieces; and several grandchildren. A son, John, preceded him in death. A graveside service was conducted by the pastor, Rick Beam.

Kenneth Blair Robertson, 65, of Greensboro, North Carolina, died Feb. 1, 2002, after a short struggle with leukemia. He and his wife of almost 42 years, Sylvia, were charter members of the Greensboro congregation of the Radio Church of God that began in 1963. They were members of United since 1995 and attended in Asheboro, North Carolina.

He will be remembered for his love of helping others. Kenneth was known and loved by many in and out of the Church. He is survived by his wife,



Kenneth Blair Robertson

Sylvia; four sons, Roger, Blane, David and Matthew; and four grandchildren. He was preceded in death by one son, Phillip.

Lucretia Paulette "Polly" Burrow of Oak Ridge, Missouri, died Jan. 16, 2002, after a six-year battle with ovarian cancer. She was baptized June 1, 1968. She attended the Cape Girardeau, Missouri, congregation beginning in 1980.

Polly had a love for photography and was rarely found without a camera in hand. Her pictures were published in numerous editions of the Southeast Missouri Hospital calendar and won awards at the Southeast Missourian newspaper picture contest. She was also an excellent painter and mastered the art of calligraphy. She was the church pianist and taught Sabbath school.

For all her talents, she will be remembered for something else—her warm smile and her love for people. Polly worked in mammography at Southeast Missouri Hospital and was recently presented the O.D. Neiswonger Award for her outstanding service in care of her patients.

Faithful and in good spirits to the end, she proved that cancer cannot



Lucretia Paulette "Polly" Burrow

silence courage, it cannot silence faith and it cannot lessen the power of the resurrection.

Polly is survived by her husband, Clark; sons, Chris and Aaron; daughter, Julie Reilman; and eight grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted in Cape Girardeau by Roger West and David Johnson, followed by a graveside service in Pochontas, Arkansas.

Letters

BRP Provides Consistency

Thank you so much for the Bible Reading Program. Even though I have been in the Church from my youth and have read the Bible through, I find the reading program an excellent aid to my study of the Scriptures. It also provides consistency and routine, which helps me in those "down" periods to plod onward with my study. Thank you to those individuals who have put much prayer and effort into preparing the program for us. It is very much appreciated.

California

Studying the Commandments

I am currently in a Bible study group which is interested in studying the Ten Commandments using your booklet. If you could send me 10 copies, I would appreciate it. My group has indicated they would like to make a donation to support the work of the United Church of God.

Illinois

"Weird" Friend and Web Site Led a Friend to Church

I had a friend in high school who was so weird. Who did not talk on the phone or go out on Friday nights or Saturday. Who explained things to me I did not understand. This same person was and still is one of those people who are pleasant to be around. I searched for your Web site to investigate exactly what I didn't understand. As you have already concluded, I found this site. I began reading the booklets and *The Good News*. What I found was pre-

sented very well in an extremely logical way. It made perfect sense. I've currently been involved in one of your congregations in Florida for better than a year now and am talking to my minister about being baptized.

I'd like to thank each and every one of you who have worked hard to keep this site up and running. I did not know how my family would take to the information. This outlet offered me something I could read without having the booklets laying around or showing up in the mail, which would have raised questions I could not have answered. So I shall end by saying thank you again for making this site available to me.

Florida

Translate Into Indonesian?

I've been happy to be one of your subscribers for a few years. The *Good News* magazine is helping me to understand the Bible. But is there any possibility to translate it into the Indonesian language? We have about 30 million Christians in this country. And I think this magazine can enrich our minds.

Indonesia

A Hunger for More

I just wanted to express my gratitude to you folks for helping me on my journey. I feel I've finally found some truth in God's Word. I feel like a kid in the first grade at school and I also have a hunger for more. Please continue to feed me the word of the gospel. I believe Jesus is the Son of God. I believe the Ten Commandments are

God's laws... My goal is to study and prepare myself for true conversion into God's family... Thank you for helping me to prepare myself!

Kentucky

"A Wonderful Experience"

I was baptized this past Sabbath and had my first Passover. It was so humbling. Tonight my wife and I will be spending the Night to Be Much Observed with around 25 brethren from our area. Tomorrow three of our local congregations will be getting together for the First Day of Unleavened Bread. Somehow I don't think I will ever be filled with spiritual food and knowledge of our great God. It's all such a wonderful experience.

Thank you for feeding us each week and every Holy Day with the truth. I just hope and pray that more of the people God calls will respond to Him. May we all stay very close to God and let Him prepare our hearts for an eternity with Him in the soon-coming Kingdom of God.

Washington

Thirsty for the Truth

I would just like to thank you for the booklets that you sent to me two months ago. I found them breathtaking, and it has brought me untold blessings. I have always been thirsty for the truth, the real truth. We have been fed lies by the churches. It's only when you read God's Word, the Bible, that you find so many taking the scriptures out of context. Your literature is second to none. I

will always keep [the booklets] as they can be read and re-read.

Internet

Good News in South Africa

Quite a few years ago, I used to subscribe to a magazine called *The Plain Truth* when Herbert W. Armstrong, its founder, was still alive. After he died, the magazine's content deteriorated and I canceled my subscription. Later, I heard that the Worldwide Church of God had split, but couldn't find the address of the new followers.

Yesterday, a copy of *The Good News* was left in my postbox, and I would like to know if this is *The Plain Truth* under a new name, because the content is similar and just as interesting. I also see that the free booklets are very much the same. Please give me some info on your history.

I used to listen to Herbert W. Armstrong's sermons on Radio Luxembourg when I was a young boy living in Northern Ireland. I would like to subscribe to *The Good News*.

South Africa

Sunday School Needs Revelation Unveiled

A few months ago your "Revelation Revealed" [*The Book of Revelation Unveiled*] booklet did just that for me—it revealed the book of Revelation in a way I could understand it better and do so on my own. It has been instrumental in my continued development of a better understanding of the intricacies of that book.

A few weeks ago my Sunday school teacher started to teach the book of Revelation. It's such a difficult thing to understand from a listener's point of view that I can't imagine how tough it must be for him to teach it! Anyway, your booklet has helped me tremendously and I would love for the other couples in our class to gain that insight as well. Is there a way you could forward about six copies of that booklet to me so that I could give one to each couple?

Internet

Visitor Stirs Excitement

I am very excited. I am a member of UCG. Recently, we had a woman and her husband attend our weekly Sabbath service. I introduced myself and inquired how they came to visit. The woman informed me that a copy of the *Good News* magazine was mailed (why, she does not know) to the retirement home where she works. She said all mail not addressed to a resident is put on her desk. She began reading the magazine, took it home and then decided to look at our Web site to find out what we believed. She showed the magazine to her husband, and they both decided to visit. Stories like these greatly encourage me.

Oklahoma

Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Comments and suggestions to improve *United News* are welcome. Mail to: *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, or e-mail mike_bennett@ucg.org.

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

Feast Updates

The deadline for completing the reservation form for **Ocho Rios, Jamaica**, has been extended to May 31.

Information about the Feast site in **Antigua, Guatemala**, is included in the *Festival Planning Brochure*, though it was not listed in the March/April *United News*.

The e-mail address for Lloyd Teetaert for the **Regina, Saskatchewan**, site is teetaert@sk.sympatico.ca. It was wrong in the last *United News*, but corrected in the *Festival Planning Brochure*.

Gatlinburg and Grange-over-Sands Highlighted on New Singles' Web Site

Information on singles activities planned for the Feast site in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, are featured on the new singles' Web site, www.ucgsingles.org. Some of the activities include a formal dance and a Country Western dance for singles. A restaurant will be designated each evening, and a hospitality room will be available each morning. A highlight will be a Bible study designed to address issues shared by singles.

The singles' Web site also gives information for singles traveling to Grange-over-Sands, England.

Ordinations Announced

Gary Black was ordained on the Feast of Trumpets 2001. He and his wife, Gale, serve in the Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation and have three daughters, Kaitlyn, Kelsey and Kristen.

Sergio Sánchez was ordained Oct. 2, 2001, and serves the Mexico City, Mexico, congregation.

Norman Julag-ay was ordained Dec. 29, 2001, and serves the Bacolod City, Philippines, congregation.

Roy Tower was ordained March 9, and he and his wife, Anne, serve the Garden Grove, California, congregation.

There were two ordinations for the Asheville, North Carolina, congregation March 28 and another April 3. Jeffrey and Nancy Baker, Bill and Dawn Johnson and Danny Good now serve that congregation as elders.

Gareth Michael (Gary) Johnson was ordained April 3. He and his wife, Nickie, serve the Olympia, Washington, congregation.

Camp Deadline

The May 1 deadline has passed, but if



What's New on the Web?

On www.ucg.org

■ Read the Council of Elders and General Conference of Elders meeting reports.

<http://www.ucg.org/a/council/council.htm>

■ The April issue of *El Comunicado* is available in HTML format and the May-June issue of *Las Buenas Noticias* is available in PDF (744K) format.

http://www.ucg.org/html/espaa_ol.shtml

On [vcmagazine.org](http://www.vcmagazine.org)

■ The May *Virtual Christian Magazine* has articles on "Living a Great Miracle—Being Led by God's Spirit," "Please Lord, Save Me From Your Followers," "The Holy Spirit: God's Power at Work," "When Life Knocks You Down...Get Up!" and "Memorial Day to Remember."

<http://vcmagazine.org>

On [youthmagazine.org](http://www.youthmagazine.org)

■ The latest issue of *Youth United* has articles

you or your son or daughter still want to attend camp this year, get an application in as soon as possible.

Staff application information is available at www.ucg.org/youthcamp/staff and full details about each camp can be found at www.ucg.org/youthcamp and on our youth Web site at www.ucgyouth.org/youthcamp.

Also, if you would like to make a donation to the UYC scholarship fund to help a needy teen attend summer camp, please send your check to the home office marked "CAMP FUND."

Good News Promotions Reach Millions

The past two years have been an exciting period for *Good News* print promotions! During this time over 9.5 million subscription brochures and inserts were mailed or distributed to households in the United States. If all these promotions were laid end to end, they would equal the length of 186,332 average size school buses or 22,256 football fields or the distance from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Denver, Colorado.

As a result of these promotions, over 131,000 people have requested their own personal subscriptions to *The Good News*. That number of people would fill two stadiums the size of the Houston Astrodome or 47 concert halls the size of Carnegie Hall in New York City or about equal the population of Pasadena, California.

In just this budget year alone, 6,493,170 print promotions were sent out. This equals a 113 percent increase over last year when 3,045,252 inserts were mailed or distributed.

So far this year, 73,753 people have requested a *Good News* subscription as a direct result of our print promotion efforts. This number represents an overall 1.1 percent response at an average \$4.35 cost per response (CPR). We have seen a significant improvement in cost per response over the 2000-2001 budget year. Last year we added 57,283 new subscribers at an average \$5.09 CPR.

Card deck promotions have been the mainstay of our print advertising efforts this budget year. Of the total number of promotions sent out, 4,750,000 were card deck inserts (73 percent). So far, 34,428 people have requested a *Good News* subscription through this advertising venue. This equals an overall 0.7 percent

on "What Kind of Spirituality Do You Want?", "What Do I Need Right Now?", "Is God Real to You?", "Is the Book Worth Reading?", "Held Hostage," "When Should You Be Baptized?" "Teens and Alcohol" and "When Cramming Helps and When It Doesn't."

<http://youthmagazine.org>

Other Helpful Links

■ **Good News radio program site.**

Listen to Real Audio files of the program and see the radio log.

<http://www.ucg.org/radio>

■ **Youth and young adult site.**

<http://ucgyouth.org>

■ **Singles' Web site** dedicated to items of interest to singles in the Church.

<http://www.ucgsingles.org>

■ **UCG Race Relations Committee site.**

<http://www.ucgrace.org>

■ **Good News Bible Reading Program** PDFs and HTML with Bible readings and commentary.

<http://www.ucg.org/brp>

■ **Good News Web site.** Sign up for e-mail notification!

<http://gnmagazine.org>

■ **Local multimedia efforts** by United congregations: *Tomorrow* television by Portland, Oregon; *Good News* television by Beloit, Wisconsin; *World News and Prophecy* radio by Donald Ward; and *The World Tomorrow* on the Isle of Man.

<http://www.ucg.org/a/localc/multimedia.htm>

■ **News page** with Council of Elders meeting reports, President's Letters, Home Office Updates, etc.

<http://www.ucg.org/a/news/news.htm>

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

response at an excellent average cost per response of \$2.38.

John LaBissoniere

Direct Mail Tests Draw High Marks

In our direct mail campaign this year, we rented 31 different mailing lists, most of which we tested for the first time. A total of 386,670 letters were mailed and so far, 23,187 people have requested a personal subscription to *The Good News*. Overall this equals an excellent 6 percent response at \$5.62 cost per response. One list actually responded as high as 12 percent and others at 7, 8 and 9 percent with a cost per response as low as \$2.88.

Although initially expensive, direct mail is a significant, targeted advertising medium. As we refine our efforts, overall response levels should continue to climb and our cost per response to fall.

John LaBissoniere

Braille Hymnal Available

Several weeks ago the home office mailed out

copies of the United Church of Church hymnal in Braille format to about a dozen members. If you or someone you know would benefit from a Braille hymnal, please let us know. In the future we hope to provide some of our other material in Braille also. You can send requests to peter_eddington@ucg.org.

Peter Eddington

"Bible and Archaeology" Series on the Web

The 24-part series from *The Good News* on "The Bible and Archaeology" has been compiled into two downloadable files.

Up until now, users have had to go through 24 different issues of the magazine to find all of the articles. Now they can be downloaded from the Literature Library page at www.ucg.org/articles/booklets. However, they are not available in print.

"We have planned for a long time to make these available in booklet form," said Scott Ashley, managing editor. However, the demand for reprinting booklets and the need for new booklets has pushed this project back at least two or three years. The series would be 90 pages, which would make it our longest and most expensive booklet, he said.



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