



## News At a Glance

### New Pastor Named for Houston South

Ministerial Services operation manager Jim Franks wrote in the Aug. 29 *Ministerial Services Newsletter and Journal*:

"Recently we announced the transfer of Ken and Kathy Giese from Houston South to Sacramento, California... With this issue of the newsletter we are able to announce that Don Ward and his wife Wanda will be moving from East Texas, where Don pastors the Ruston, Louisiana, congregation, to Houston, where he will become the new pastor for the Houston South congregation. The Wards will be at services in Houston South on the Sabbath of Sept. 13 to be introduced to the congregation. They plan to move to Houston as soon as possible after the Feast of Tabernacles.

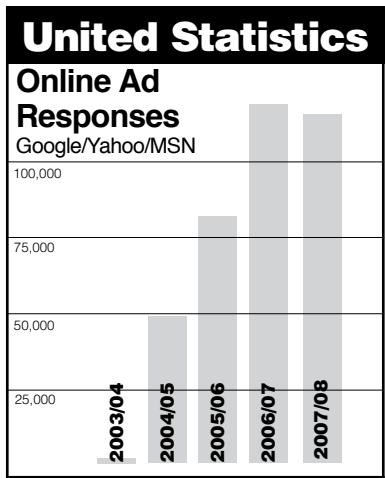
"Ken Treybig is being appointed as the new pastor for Ruston. Currently Ken and Kathy Treybig serve the East Texas and Texarkana congregations. After the Wards move, Ken will pastor the congregations in East Texas, Texarkana and Ruston.

"Some time after the Feast of Tabernacles, when all the summer moves are completed and the pastors and elders in the South Central Region have been surveyed, a new regional pastor will be appointed to replace Ken Giese."

### Treasurer Reports on August and Audit

Each year in the month of August, we schedule the annual independent audit of the Church's financial records for the previous fiscal year. All indications are good, and we expect to see a draft of the audited financial statements soon. As we do each year, we will publish our audited financial statements for the prior fiscal year in the

See "News at a Glance," page 2



## Council Reviews Year, Focuses on the Future

by John Foster

The first Council meeting of the new fiscal year was called to order by Chairman Robert Dick Aug. 11. After an oral reading of the Council Code of Ethics by Victor Kubik, Clyde Kilough presented the President's Unified Report (see page 7). He also presented the first status report on steps being taken to implement the new Operation Plan.

### Implementation of Strategies

Mr. Dick mentioned that after much work and planning, we now have an

approved plan from which to proceed. In the contract with Leadership Strategies, we asked for a follow-up period of six months for training on how to monitor and assess the plan. Treasurer Jason Lovelady stated that in October there will be a meeting conducted by Leadership Strategies with the administration to review what has been produced in regards to strategy implementation. In December, Leadership Strategies will meet with the Council to give guidance in how to assess and monitor the fulfillment of the objectives.

Mr. Kilough then discussed what has happened since May. He said we are reap-

ing very good dividends working with this plan. Having the Council say "this is what we want" has been very helpful. We have considered every aspect of what we did and now do and what we'd like to do in the future. This planning has led us to a collective decision process, and it led us to see priorities in what we do. It clarified the focus for us. The value has been very good in that we have consistency in understanding what is expected of the staff.

### Specific Deliverables and Action Plans

Mr. Kilough presented a handout that

will be the primary format for future president's reports to the Council. It will show each of the strategies and the various deliverables for each strategy. A deliverable is what we plan to do to implement a strategy, and each deliverable has an action plan. We have put 68 deliverables with their action plans on paper, but we now need to review them as a whole and prioritize them.

Mr. Kilough gave an example of one objective in the Operation Plan: "Increase percentage of students who complete the

See "Council," page 7

## ABC 2008 Graduates; New Class Begins



Thomas Deal and Eileen Sharkey receive Ambassador Excellence Award from Clyde Kilough; Jeffrey Cox and Laura and Eric Jeffords receive Council of Elders Service Award from Robert Dick; ABC chorale

by Linda Merrick

On Aug. 10, the ABC class of 2008 graduated. After seven months of hard work, serving and learning God's Word, the class was ready to graduate. Everyone was exhausted but was sad to say good-bye to friends and instructors.

Chris Salva, student body president, and Clyde Kilough, UCGIA president, gave speeches and the ABC chorale sang two songs. They sang "Never-Ending Song of Praise" and "You've Got a Friend in Me" from the movie *Toy Story*.

Cake, champagne and sparkling juice were served afterward while students and their families fellowshiped.

Thomas Deal and Eileen Sharkey received the Ambassador Excellence Award from Mr. Kilough. Eric and Laura Jeffords and Jeffrey Cox were presented with the Council of Elders Service Award by Council Chairman Robert Dick.

For more on the ABC 2008 year, see page 6. The new nine-month ABC 2008-2009 year begins with orientation Sept. 7 and classes Sept. 8. UN

## "Making Disciples: A Whole Church Effort" to Be GCE 2009 Theme

Aug. 12 the Council of Elders by unanimous resolution formally agreed to use the Holiday Inn Eastgate, Cincinnati, Ohio, for the May 3-4, 2009, General Conference of Elders annual meeting.

The GCE Planning Task Force presented four choices for themes. The Council agreed to proceed with the theme "Making Disciples: A Whole Church Effort." Some concepts listed in another of the theme ideas will also be incorporated.

A suggestion from the task force was to allot more time to the international reports—up to 15 minutes per area, which the Council approved.

The GCE task force was asked to look into whether there should be an open mike Q&A session with the Council.

Considering the high cost of travel expenses, they were also asked to consider whether there would be a need to have a full conference each year or if, instead, every third year there could be a full conference at which all elders would be fully subsidized.

The task force will report back to the Council in December.

John Foster

## 240 GN Readers Attend Public Lectures in Australia

by Ken Murray and Bill Eddington

"Events in the 21st Century Will Change Your World! Every man, woman and child will be affected."

That was the banner headline on the invitation distributed to all Australian *Good News* readers inviting them to attend the public Bible lectures that took place in Brisbane July 12 and Melbourne July 19.

### Brisbane

On July 12, 283 people came to Kimberley Park Auditorium in Brisbane to hear lectures from three speakers: Melvin Rhodes and Gary Petty from the

and local pastor Bill Bradford.

About 110 were from the general GN readership, 15 were from various Church of God groups and 158 were



Left, flyer sent to Australian *Good News* and *WNP* readers; above, Melvin Rhodes speaks in Brisbane

United States, members of UCG congregations in southeast Queensland. Some visitors had traveled many miles to attend.

Mr. Rhodes delivered the first mes-

See "Public Lectures," page 3

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## News At a Glance

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November issue of *United News*.

As we reported earlier, income for the month of July was nearly identical to last year. We are glad to report that income for the month of August has trended upwards. While last year August was a relatively weak month of income, we still had two more banking days last year as compared with this year, and yet we still ended the month of August this year with an increase in income for the month of 5.6 percent. Year-to-date income is now \$2,923,321, which represents a year-to-date increase in income of 2.2 percent.

As always, it is to God we give thanks for His continued blessings and to the members of the Church and others who support the work generously through their faithfulness in giving tithes and offerings.

Jason Lovelady

## Details Announced for Feast Video: *Our Heritage of Faith*

This year's Feast of Tabernacles sermon video titled "Our Heritage of Faith," recounts the story of our spiritual heritage and the keeping of God's feasts in this modern age of the Church.

President Clyde Kilough delivers a message punctuated with interviews and footage of historical sites in Oregon and Texas where Herbert W. Armstrong conducted his ministry during the foundational period of the Church in our days. Many of these sites are mentioned in the autobiography of Mr. Armstrong.

This story has special relevance in 2008 as the Church of God has now been keeping these festivals for the past 75 years.

The announcement of the sermon video says, "We are especially excited to share this history with our young people to help them remember our roots and embrace the heritage we all share. . . . You will meet brethren living in the United States as they recall the earliest days of keeping the Feast in this modern time. We truly look forward to God's Kingdom and the time when all of humankind will be keeping God's annual Sabbaths—pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles!"

The sermon video is approximately 68 minutes in run time.

## Two Elders Credentialed

On Aug. 13, the Council of Elders approved two credentialing petitions.

Charles May and his wife, Ruth Ann, are serving in the Bentonville, Arkansas, congregation.

Barry Howdeshell and his wife, Jean, are serving in the Little Rock, Arkansas, congregation.

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## Profile: New Council Member Darris McNeely

Darris McNeely grew up in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, a small town on the banks of the Mississippi River 125 miles south of St. Louis, Missouri.

From an early age he worked around his father, a veteran of Omaha Beach during World War II, in his Texaco gas station. "From him I learned a work ethic and an appreciation for those who labor with their hands," Mr. McNeely said. "From my mother, who grew up during the Depression, I learned a compassion for those with little." Both of his parents were of Scotch-Irish descent.

His mother began reading *The Plain Truth* magazine in the early 1960s, and it was through her teaching and example that he became a part of the Church of God.

Mr. McNeely attended Ambassador College in Pasadena, California, from 1970 to 1973. In 1973 he married Debra Detwiler. Her parents came into the Church in Ohio in the mid-1960s. She comes from a Mennonite background. The McNeelys have two grown sons, Christopher and Ryan. Ryan and his wife, Stephanie, are members of UCG. The McNeelys have two grandchildren.

Mr. McNeely has spent 35 years in the full-time ministry. The past 18 years they have lived in Indianapolis, Indiana, pastoring churches there and in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

"Besides the daily care of the churches, I have spent these years working in two areas that have given me great satisfaction—youth work and media,"

said Mr. McNeely. He has been on teams that developed two major youth initiatives in God's Church, YOU and UYC. For the past 12 years in United he has been involved in media efforts such as *World News and Prophecy* (as managing editor) and *Beyond Today* (host).

"Through these years Debbie and I have worked as a team," Mr. McNeely said. "Anything I have done has had the benefit of her wisdom, counsel and intelligence behind it. It would be difficult for me to distinguish between what is mine and hers; it has been a team ministry."

In May the General Conference of Elders selected Mr. McNeely to serve on the Council of Elders.

"I look forward to working with



Debbie and Darris McNeely

the Council of Elders in meeting the critical needs of preaching the gospel and caring for those God calls to His Church," he said. "We are building on a heritage of many fine and dedicated people who have gone before us. It is a privilege to work in a senior leadership role for the Church at this exciting time in its history." **UN**

If you would like to recommend a member to be featured in the "Profiles" section, e-mail [mike\\_bennett@ucg.org](mailto:mike_bennett@ucg.org).

## FORWARD! The Transfiguration: A Preview of the Kingdom

by Mike Bennett



What if you were camping in the mountains, and suddenly one of your friends, the leader of the group, started glowing—shining as brilliantly as the sun! And not only that, but two famous people from history suddenly appeared, maybe historical figures like George Washington and Winston Churchill. You'd remember that!

Near the end of his life, the apostle Peter remembered back to such a life-changing experience. He wrote about it in a letter reminding the brethren of some of the most important lessons he had learned and taught them. In 2 Peter 1, Peter first recounts many of the rich and wonderful promises God has made.

In verse 14, he talks about his body as his tent—his tabernacle. In the next verse Peter speaks of his approaching death using the Greek word *exodus*, his departure—like Israel exited Egypt and lived in tents on their way to the Promised Land.

Tents, the exodus—that reminds me of Leviticus 23:43 about dwelling in booths at the Feast of Taber-

nacles, "that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt."

Then Peter recounts this awesome event from his time with Christ, an event that gives us a vision of the future time we will picture at the Feast. That event was the Transfiguration.

"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Peter 1:16). In verses 17 and 18 Peter recalls hearing the Father's affirmation "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" on the mount during the Transfiguration.

Please take the time to read the account in eight short verses in Mark 9:1-8. It's a powerful reminder and excellent preparation for the coming Feast.

Peter, James and John were in vision "transported" into the future to see Christ in His glory in His Kingdom.

The word translated "transfigured" is later used to show the change we Christians must make to become in the likeness of Christ (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). To be part of that Kingdom, we will also have to be transfigured—transformed, by the renewing of our minds through yielding to the Holy Spirit to obey every word of God.

Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets, and both are mentioned together in Malachi 4:4-6 in a prophecy of the end time.

Through this vision, God made clear to the disciples that Jesus Christ was far above these heroes of history that Peter, James and John were in awe of. The voice from the cloud told them that Christ was God's beloved Son and they should hear Him! This alludes to Deuteronomy 18:15-18 where Moses told the people a Prophet would come after him, and to hear Him. Christ was that Prophet. He was the Son of God, and at that voice the disciples "fell on their faces and were greatly afraid" as it says in the parallel account in Matthew.

This word, translated "hear" or "listen," in its full sense means obedience.

William Barclay wrote, "The glory of Jesus on the mountaintop and the visions of the prophets combine to make it certain that the Second Coming is a living reality which all men must expect and for which all men must prepare."

Remember the Transfiguration. Remember to hear what Christ is telling us at the Feast and throughout our lives. Remember this promise of His return, and remember to prepare for the coming of His Kingdom! **UN**

Mike Bennett is managing editor of United News.

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

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

**International addresses:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: [info@ucg.org](mailto:info@ucg.org)

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAURITIUS: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius. E-mail: [mauritiuss@ucg.org](mailto:mauritiuss@ucg.org)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## News From **Around the World**

### Australian Public Bible Lectures Successful

**"Public Lectures," continued from page 1**

sage about what the Bible says about Australia in the 21st century. Mr. Petty explained early Church history in a message titled "The Day Christ's Message Was Changed." Mr. Bradford rounded off the messages by showing that the true biblical message of salvation is the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

"The first message by Mr. Rhodes was followed by enthusiastic applause and a buzz of conversation as people discussed what they had heard with each other and the members they had met," said member Jim Bellamy. The applause and conversation continued throughout the day.

A short question-and-answer session with the presenters completed a full and stimulating day.

"The question-and-answer session... produced intelligent and friendly interaction with the audience," said Mr. Bellamy. "We were greatly blessed with the peace and harmony of the whole day."

Many visitors said they were glad they came and were impressed by the information presented.

Before the lectures began, many of the brethren mingled with the visitors, assisting them with their inquiries and helping them to find their seats.

The Brisbane Church members also provided a delicious morning tea and lunch that were warmly served by some

of the younger members of the Church, providing a relaxed atmosphere where people could chat and comment about



Gary Petty, Melvin Rhodes and Bil Bradford conduct Q&A session during public lecture in Brisbane

the seminars and ask further questions if they so desired.

"All our hosts were able to develop an immediate relationship with the guests, and this relationship seemed to continue through to the end of the event," said Mr. Bradford. "This personal touch was invaluable and their contribution to the success of the event was estimated to be as important as the messages presented."

#### Great Interest in Melbourne

All together 115 guests and about 110 Church members attended the lectures in Melbourne July 19.

Thanks to the diligent efforts of sound and video operators Steve Mihalec, Joe Zammit and Ken Brew, all was ready for the biggest public event the Church has presented in Melbourne since the 1970s.

Arriving guests were greeted by a team of hosts coordinated by Tony and Ruth Edge. The hosts gave a warm welcome to the guests and ensured they were settled before the lectures were introduced by master of ceremonies Barry Williams.

Because the capacity of the auditorium was limited, Church members sat in another room. However the members were able to mingle with the guests before and after the lectures and during the 45-minute lunch break. The ladies from the Bacchus Marsh congregation put in the great effort to make up a luncheon for 300 plus people.

#### Follow Up

About a dozen or more people in each location inquired about church services, Mr. Bradford said. They were offered the address and the subjects to be covered in the next few weeks.

DVDs of the event are being sent to about 50 people who called but couldn't attend because of the distance and another 150 are being sent to those who did attend and requested a DVD.

Mr. Rhodes said he felt everyone was respectful and seemed appreciative as an audience. He said that from experience he knows "people love hearing the truth, but many do not have the drive to do anything about it and truly seek God. I hope that many of these people will break the mold and start attending Church where they can really learn more." **UN**

### International News At a Glance

#### German Subtitles and Voice-Overs Being Added

Over the last few weeks UCG-Germany editorial staff member Jesmina Allaoua has translated 25 of the *Beyond Today* commentary scripts provided by UCG Web manager Aaron Booth and his volunteer helpers.

You can see an example of the German subtitles currently on the German *Good News* Web site [www.gutenachrichten.org](http://www.gutenachrichten.org). The featured example by Steve Myers is interesting because it presented a translation challenge: "cover up" in German doesn't have both meanings (as in "make up" and "trying to hide something") as it does in English. So we worked around that.

Working on these subtitled *Beyond Today* programs gave us our next idea—to do them as "voice-overs" with the spoken German text added locally.

The voice-over style is often used for interviews, etc., on German television and was very successful for the telecast in our previous affiliation (we have a couple of UCG members who came into contact via the voice-over telecast).

Clay Thornton at the home office will provide the original English *Beyond Today* video commentary, and UCG-Germany will do the rest ourselves. The subtitles will provide the text for the audio track we will add.

This project has opened up a new media avenue for us, enabling us to make use of *Beyond Today* material.

Paul Kieffer

#### British Isles Welcomes New Donors and Coworkers

The UCG-British Isles Office Update of June 30 gave a summary of how the office interacts with those who become donors and coworkers.

When a subscriber donates for the first time, we send them a thank-you note with an offer of the *Making Life Work* booklet and a Gift Aid form that they may fill out if they wish, with a freepost envelope.

If the same person donates again within a six-month period, this could indicate a genuine interest in becoming more involved with the work of the Church. We then designate them as a coworker and offer a subscription to *United News*, enclosing a sample copy.

We enclose these offers with the receipt for the donation, and they are sent out soon after the end of the calendar month.

A number of people have recently requested our standing order form, which indicates an intention to donate regularly.

Over the past 12 months, 165 subscribers have sent in a donation when they returned their renewal form (8 percent of the 1,976 subscribers who renewed). Of course, a number of readers also donate at other times.

Here is a comment from one of those who support UCG-British Isles financially: "I have been seeking answers to many questions in Scripture, and through your publications they are answered! I enclose a donation towards your ministry. As I am a pensioner, for now this is all I can afford" (M.M., Wiltshire).

#### New Group in Zimbabwe Meets for Pentecost

A small group of 14 people gathered for the Feast of Pentecost in the town of Masvingo in the heart of Zimbabwe.

Three of us drove from Harare (the capital) on the morning of June 7. We drove the 300 kilometers (about 185 miles) to Masvingo and held a church service that morning. Two of us were accommodated at the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. Zimuto, who are helping the Church in organizing meeting places and other errands in that area. There were 12 in attendance.

The next day, Pentecost, 14 people attended. We would have liked two hours for the church service and get-together, but we were only allowed one hour because other groups had already booked the place. However that did not dampen the spirit of the group. We held a quick one-hour Pentecost service then had our get-together outside.

We shared a meal that Mrs. Zimuto had prepared while we fellowshiped. Afterward we drove the Zimutos and a

### Caribbean Young Adults/Singles Share Weekend

by Ken Thomas, Jamaica

In my three years of Church experience, I have found there is nothing like camp. As one person said, "Miracles happen at camp."

While the Caribbean Singles/Young Adults weekend was not a camp by name, it certainly had many elements of camp. This year 14 singles met at the Ocean Front Resort in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, for the weekend, which ran from Aug. 7 to 10. Most were Jamaicans as increasing travel expenses prevented some from other islands from attending. There were two from the Bahamas and three from Barbados.

The first full day, Friday, featured a Leadership Seminar by Kingsley Mather. After breakfast, we all gathered to have a session on a chosen topic. The subject was "Glorifying God," and we singles proved to have the power to steer conversation, much to the elders' delight. The seminar also focused on the issue of the small population of youth in the Caribbean Church areas, and how to help work against the outflow that has been occurring.

Later, the group went out searching for souvenirs. This was a fun experience in itself as our Caribbean brethren got a better taste of Jamaica. One in particular (Myrlande Pierre from the Bahamas) intended that to be quite literal, buying spices to take home.



Sabbath service with a sea view: Leeford Burke gives split sermon (photo by Brian White)

Sabbath was the sweetest experience. Being one of the singles with no family members in the Church, I can say there are few pleasures greater than spending a Sabbath with a household of people who share the same reverence for the Creator's Holy Day.

The singles proved very prepared for the Bible study that Sabbath (Friday) night. Discussing the issue of marrying outside the faith, we picked it apart from various angles including practicality and the examples of the Church from as far back as the days of King Solomon.

That night, a group of singles gathered by the pool enjoying the evening while singing praises to God. Who knew such a simple act as singing could have such impact? Feeling spiritually enriched, I slept more soundly that night than I had in a while.

The next morning's Leadership Sem-

inar dealt with the building of strong relationships. We looked at biblical examples of strong family bonds, and singles were put in teams and given scenarios to discuss and present the biblical ways to handle each situation.

The Sabbath service was held on compound with Bajan Michael Lowe playing the keyboard and Jamaican Shane Panton leading the song service. Todd Carey and Leeford Burke gave us the split sermons for the afternoon focusing on true love and relationships among brethren.

We later took photos and read our Sabbath notes. Then, sunset came and Sabbath was over.

But the weekend had one final bang for us. To music that varied from reggae to American oldies, singles and elders alike celebrated our last night together with a pool party. The pool lent itself to a "keep away" game that proved quite fun.

We celebrated well into the night. And as we parted ways the next morning, many could not help but shed tears.

We realized that these bonds—formed and strengthened on this special weekend—are bonds that will last forever. This weekend proved to be the inspiration needed to revitalize zeal and rekindle our hope for the future.

Truly, miracles happen at camp. **UN**



Pentecost in Masvingo, Zimbabwe

few others back to their homes before we got on our 300-kilometer journey back to Harare.

It was a really enjoyable Pentecost, being the first one in that area. We hope that there will be more gatherings to worship God and fellowship in the future, in addition to the five or six Bible studies that have been conducted in the area in the last six months or so.

H.N. Hlazo

# Six Countries Represented at British Isles Summer Camp

As in 2007, the United Youth Camp 2008 in Britain was held at the Buxton Field Centre on the outskirts of the famous spa town. Campers, staff and occasional visitors, either for Sabbath services or for an activity, resulted in upwards of 40 people attending or passing through camp during the nine days. The youngest camper was just 8 years old and the oldest was 20.

Campers and staff hailed from Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Ireland and Colombia, as well as those living in the United Kingdom. It was a multilingual as well as multicultural camp.

Activities included archery, visits to local caverns and museums, swimming and half a day learning rock climbing, with an indoor cave, outdoor low ropes course and team building exercises thrown in. Encaustic art (painting with hot wax) was another favorite, along with finger knitting, glass painting and braiding friendship bracelets.

Some of the older campers, not put off by last year's exertions, experienced "Go Ape" (a high-wire forest adventure course of rope bridges, tarzan swings and zip slides all set high up in the tree tops). Thai dancing was demonstrated by the young ladies of the Karen community in the Sheffield congregation.



tion. Pictionary and a beetle drive also proved popular—although the former sometimes proved to be a challenge with the language differences!

Everyone was delighted to welcome former campers Laura Payne and Hannah Ellams, who gave a joint talk on the legacy of summer camps in their lives and encouraged campers to get the most they could out of these few days together. One evening older teens and young adults watched and discussed

Pam Stenzel's presentation *Sex Has a Price Tag*.

David Payne and David Fenney gave split sermons at the first Sabbath service. The final Sabbath David Fenney and Peter Hawkins

covered the plan of God in their messages.

The weather was dry most of the time, although heavy thunderstorms

bread left in the toaster caught fire! In accordance with fire alarm instructions, the building was evacuated but no harm was done, not even to the toaster (although the slice of bread responsible was not fit to eat).

Most evenings there was a forum to discuss topics of interest raised by the young people, and each day ended with a hymn and prayer. Unusually there were two final dinners: Thursday night and the last Saturday night. This was



From left: Janic from Switzerland takes aim; campers step in unison; Richard climbs while Isaiah belays; campers try encaustic art (photos by Barbara Fenney)

on consecutive nights played havoc with the power supply for a while. We also had a fire alert when a piece of

because the German contingent had to leave on Friday.

David and Barbara Fenney

# Tlachtli Camp in Mexico Serves 57 Campers

Fifty-seven campers and seven staff members gathered at Tlachtli camp site near San Luis Potosi City, Mexico, for the annual United Youth Camp.

We stayed in Tlachtli from July 22 to 25. The last two days of the camp, July 26 and 27, took place in San Luis Potosi City.

The theme of this year's camp was "Catching the Vision of Your Destiny." Tlachtli is an ecological camp where campers learn to practice a very moderate use of water and to behave in a respectful manner toward God's creation, endeavoring not to misuse, mistreat and/or cause any damage to the environment.

All the physical activities (which include mountain hiking, rappelling, Tyrolean or zip wire crossing, cave exploration and different games) were directed by the professional Tlachtli camp staff. They have been trained in working with young people and have a very friendly and respectful attitude toward our young people as well as toward the Church staff members.

The activities also included a trip to the Media Luna (Half Moon), a recreation center with swimming pools that is about a two hours' drive from Tlachtli.

Right after breakfast we provided our young people with morning lectures, imparted by the attending ministers Adán Langarica (camp director and San Luis Potosi City pastor), Enrique Granados (Mexico City pastor), Alberto Gonzalez (Tepic City local elder) and Pablo Dimakis (visiting pastor in northern and southeast regions in Mexico), and also by André Delgado (a Church member in Monterrey City who owns and manages an advertising agency).

The topics covered included:

- What is your vision of your future?
- How can you be a true friend?
- What is your final destination?
- Using teamwork to achieve our supreme goal.
- Learning to take off your masks.

The campers were encouraged to participate during the lectures, especially in the mask-making activity, where they had to describe each other's mask first and then what they saw in each other's face.

This year's camp was characterized by the very friendly, participatory and respectful attitude of all the campers, which shows that our young people have been growing



Campers in Mexico hear morning lecture from Enrique Granados, pastor of the Mexico City congregation (photo by André Delgado)

in God's way of life. The resulting environment was very encouraging and inspiring.

The camp concluded with Sabbath

services in San Luis Potosi City and a closing dance Saturday night. Certificates for best campers were given to Silvia Barcenas (Queretaro), Polette

Delgado (Monterrey), Gustavo Elizondo (Leon) and Alan Rosales (Mexico City).

Pablo Dimakis

# A Dozen Young Adults Rise to Challenge of the Wind Rivers Wilderness Expedition

On Sunday, July 20, a dozen young adults converged in Dubois, Wyoming, to begin the Wind Rivers Wilderness Expedition. This latest Challenger II program, directed by Paul Luecke and staffed by Mark Mickelson and Mr. and Mrs. Jon Pinelli, provided focused, individual mentoring of young adults in leadership and serving principles and created an incredible venue for lessons, friends and memories.

Monday morning began a full day of training, covering backpacking essentials, wilderness first aid, orienteering and topo-map skills, and team dynamics.

On Tuesday morning the group divided into two teams and we began our hike into the Wind Rivers, a vast mountainous region in northwestern Wyoming. Due to its extremely rugged terrain and intense elevation changes, it is untouched by roads and settlements. Each team had to find the destination on its own using maps and the skills learned.

Bonds strengthened under hardship, as altitude affected some and the weight of backpacks took a toll. It took longer



Above, Challenger II group: (front row) Paul Moody, Paul Luecke, Rachel Luecke, Debbie Pinelli, Mark Mickelson, Jon Pinelli; (standing) Jeff Kramer, Chris Foster, JoAnna Porter, Sheri Schultz, Tom Burrow, Mahalia Mills, Brett Diggins, Aaron Henderson, Greg Rorem and Michael Sherry (photos by Debbie Pierce, Mahalia Mills, Paul Moody and Jon Pinelli)



than planned, but finally both teams made it to the rendezvous point, at an elevation of about 10,400 feet. We decided to establish camp

at this point, which turned out to be an improvement over the original plan. Over the course of the program God's hand became visible in guiding several circumstances like this.

The next two days featured rock climbing at two spectacular locations with snow-covered vistas in the background. Teammates on the ground shouted encouragement to those climbing, which benefited even the experienced climbers. Our entire Challenger II expedition can be paralleled to the way we should live our Christian lives. We should be encouraging each other when trials come along.

Friday we hiked to Hidden Lake, a truly hidden, little-known angler's gem

jumping with trout. The team returned to camp Friday evening with a few sunburned spots, and over two-dozen fresh trout—a gourmet Sabbath meal!



the campfire, focusing on living our faith in the real world. We concluded each day singing a hymn together. The Sabbath was a wonderfully restful day, with services, men's and women's Bible studies and personal time.

We cooked dinner each evening mostly by reconstituting tasty, dehydrated foods with hot water. Water for cooking, drinking and bathing came out of cold streams of snowmelt. On the hike down Sunday morning, all were motivated by thoughts of hot water, indoor plumbing and a farewell dinner at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Wil Berg (Dubois congregation pastor).

For some participants this was their first major challenge adventure, yet apprehension soon turned into excitement. The program certainly lives up

to its reputation, as all participants found themselves challenged and learning lessons every day. Everyone left with new, close friendships and stories of overcoming obstacles. As one participant said, it was "the most difficult and wonderful thing I've ever done."



Each morning we had a Compass Check, which provided a perspective through which to view our experiences, or a spiritual parallel of some aspect of our journey up to that point. Each evening we had a discussion around

Aaron Henderson and JoAnna Porter, Challenger II participants

# Camp Pinecrest—Striving to Rise Above the World

Every UCG camp was given the assignment to teach our teens to "Rise Above the World." Our staff and ministry at Pinecrest succeeded in accomplishing that goal. Every Compass Check each morning covered a segment of this theme. We were told what to rise above and how to rise above it. Virtually every survey we received back from our campers told us they remembered the theme very well.

Sometimes our expectations of our children are so high that we forget what marvelous kids we really have. A conversation I had during camp drove that point home to me.

A key staff member who works for the Nazarene church responsible for running this site approached me. He told me we had the nicest group of campers he had seen all summer. "They are respectful and speak when spoken to," he stated. Then he pointed at the table near the ice cream machine and said, "The normal camp here would have that table a total mess. Your campers are clean!"

Two days later, I was speaking with a retired minister of the same church who had been coming to this camp since he was 13 years old. Now in his late 60s

or early 70s, he certainly knows good behavior at camp when he sees it. He remarked to me, "Your campers inspire me" and again a few moments later, "I am really inspired by your campers and your group."

And God certainly did His part in blessing our camp. Normally Pinecrest is held in the beginning of June. Since that date was not available, we expected hot, muggy weather and a canoe-dragging riverbed. Quite to the contrary, the weather was unseasonably mild and water levels were just about right to make canoeing for our campers a fun-filled experi-

ence. We had rain, but no venues were cancelled.

ence. We had rain, but no venues were cancelled.

The 142 campers and 59 staff members were privileged to hear



of a couple messages that stuck with the campers were "Don't Feed the Sumo" and "Staying in the Middle of the Herd." Not feeding our passions and keeping safe by being totally involved in the middle of God's way of life were the lessons driven home in these two messages.

We were also blessed to have David Johnson from the home office visit us and present information about Ambassador Bible Center. More than half a dozen of our staff had already

graduated from ABC. All were enthusiastic; some discussed their experiences hoping to see many of our young people apply in the future.

Our ministry and wives and staff thank all of you for your prayers and



Left, girls help dormmate through "radioactive spider web" in the ropes course; above, participating in softball and archery activities

support that makes our camps so successful. Keep up the good work in training your children in God's

way. They have certainly already risen above this world!

Greg Sargent

# Rising Above the World Today at Camp Heritage 2008

Season number 13 is “in the books” for the United Youth Camp at Camp Heritage, near Farmington, Pennsylvania. This year’s attendance of 140 campers and 65 staff was very close to last year’s levels, but we had quite an increase in our Challenge program, with 69 Challenge campers (ages 16 to 18), compared to

downright chilly. At 10:30 a.m. the temperature still stood at a brisk 59 degrees Fahrenheit—water polo was not exactly the “activity of choice” that day! But by Tuesday, the temperatures settled into mid-to high-70s for daytime highs, and low 60s for overnight lows—perfect



Christian Living, archery, team building and a chilly waterfront

only 54 last year. And we had 25 campers who were 15 this year! So next year we could be “bursting at the seams” with Challenge-level campers! Bring it on—Camp Heritage is ready!

The weather challenged us with an unusual facet on Monday, Aug. 11, the first full day of camp—it was

weather for camping in the Laurel Highlands of western Pennsylvania.

There was no rain all week, in contrast to the season as a whole in the area. Heritage Reservation’s head ranger told us on check-in day, “Now that you’re here, the weather will be fine!” He was right!



Christian Living classes daily and Life Skills class (once in the week for each dorm) focused on the theme of “rising above the world today,” with presenters approaching the topic from different angles.

The media class, introduced last year by Chris Moen (pastor in Canton and Mansfield, Ohio), was another resounding success. He was ably assisted by Teresa Haney and Ashley Moen. The class produced the annual slide show (with video clips) for the Saturday night dance and Volume 2 of *The*

*Heritage Herald*, the camp newspaper. Campers and staff were able to take copies home with them when they checked out Aug. 17, as well as copies of the DVD slide show.

Our Adventure campers (ages 12 to 15) returned to the Laurel Cav-

back dirty but happy, having descended 464 feet deep into the cave... and they all came back! Challenge campers once again successfully took on the Lower Youghiogheny River for an 8-mile white-water rafting trip.

Once more we were grateful for



God’s protection and guidance. Thankfully, injuries were mostly of the sprains, bumps, bruises and scratches variety. The overall atmosphere was great—a testament to both staff and campers for their participation and desire to make camp the success we all seek.

We’re already planning our 14th year at Camp Heritage, scheduled for Aug. 9-16, 2009. See you then!

Doug Johnson

erns for a spelunking expedition for the first time since 2005. They came

## ABC 2008 Was Great!

by Gary E. Antion

Thirty-one ABC students walked across the stage on Aug. 10 to receive their diplomas in Biblical Studies for this, the ninth year of Ambassador Bible Center. It was a bittersweet day. The joy of accomplishment was tempered by the sadness of

knowing the class would be departing for their homes, universities and employment. But it was a great year.

Some highlights of the year were:

- Orientation: The students were able to get acquainted with faculty, staff and each other.
- Social Activities: Students enjoyed

small and large group gatherings for cook-outs, dinners, movies, games and good, clean fun. Faculty members invited them over for dinners and dessert. And the students put on a very successful Super Bowl Party for staff and graduates.

- Work Parties: The class raised money for charities, including a very successful car wash.
- Two Field Trips: They traveled to the Creation Museum and the Air Force

### Synergy: ABC Shows Teamwork

by David Register

The ABC class of 2008 was unique, like every class. However, this class excelled in a couple of clear areas. The best word I can come up with to describe this sense of teamwork is *synergy*. Over the months the class was together I observed that they gradually grew closer and closer. The 31 separate and distinct personalities began to work more closely together as the year progressed. They meshed together like no previous class.

This synergy personified itself in the outstanding and beautiful music the chorale sang in their last couple of performances. While other chorales have been larger, this chorale sounded as good as or better than any previous chorale I have heard. The first few practices sounded disjointed and rough. But with the help of our music director, Ken Shoemaker, this class made a noticeable metamorphosis into an outstanding musical group over the seven months of practices and performances. By the end of the year, they sang beautifully together and moved the rest of us with their music!

The second activity that demonstrated this synergy was the annual charity fund-raiser. Again, the class came together. Everyone worked hard and participated. They all contributed and in the end, this class raised more funds for the Nigerian Children’s Education Fund than any previous class had ever raised for any fundraising project.

The class of 2008 will be remembered as the class that worked together well as a team and developed “synergy” to accomplish great things in the short time they were in Cincinnati!



From top, ABC students in class, at Air Force Museum and pouring water for Humana Heart Walk (photos by Michelle de Campos)



Museum, both of which were educational and enjoyable.

• ABC Chorale: The chorale members practiced diligently and served several congregations in and around Cincinnati area. They provided praise to God and fellowshiped with numerous brethren.

• Service Projects: Students signed dozens of cards that were sent to those who needed encouragement. They handed out



water to participants in the Humana Heart Walk, made brunch for needy families at Ronald McDonald House, hosted a blood drive and put on the ABC Charity Auction,

which set the record for the most money raised (over \$11,000).

• Graduation Week: First they enjoyed a steak dinner and dancing with a beautiful view of downtown Cincinnati Aug. 7. Aug. 10 was the Graduation Brunch with family and friends and then the graduation exercises followed by beautiful desserts and beverages in celebration.

ABC 2008 was great. With only 31 students, this class accomplished so much and set two records in the process. We wish them much success in their future endeavors and thank them for the sacrifices they made to increase their knowledge of God’s Word and to grow in the stature and fullness of Jesus Christ. May God be with them! **UN**

**“Council,” continued from page 1**

*Bible Study Course.*” One of the strategies for this objective is “Rewrite the *BSC* to improve content and add interactivity to increase completion percentage.” There were four deliverables to implement this one strategy and each deliverable had five or more action steps. Target dates for completion of each of these action steps were also determined. This is the type of work involved for every one of the strategies listed in the Operation Plan.

Mr. Kilough said that at the end of the day, if the objective is not accomplished, then we will need to backtrack and see what can be done to improve fulfilling the objective. The monitoring and assessing of the plans will help us analyze what we are doing and what still needs to be accomplished.

Mr. Kilough then discussed the news of Web development. It is believed that a lot of our material needs to be rewritten just to fit the Web. This is quite labor intensive, and Mike Bennett has been asked to oversee that project. He will be working on editorial Web content and the new *BSC*. He will continue to produce *United News* until an associate editor can be brought in to help on that publication.

Another of the strategies called for using volunteers to help develop an effective Web presence. One of the deliverables that has been accomplished was to choose a group of individuals who are talented in Web marketing and technology. About 30 people have been contacted for input and ideas. A task force of 10 is currently working on Web enrichment processes and plans for longer-term changes to our Web presence. The team will work directly with Aaron Booth, our Web manager, who was given high marks by the team for actions he has already taken.

Mr. Kilough also discussed the strategy that calls for the development of a plan to communicate with employees to increase satisfaction and effectiveness. There is now in place a communication team of eight home office employees chaired by Richard Kennebeck. This team is soliciting ideas and will present a proposed plan to the president on how communication can be increased among employees.

At this point, some asked how the Council monitors “soft issues” such as member or employee satisfaction. Mr. Kilough mentioned those are some of the toughest things to measure or monitor. He stated that the same survey questions can be given each year, and if there is more satisfaction noted in those surveys, then that would be an improvement.

Mr. Dick reminded the Council that they will be the body responsible to monitor, assess and grade the fulfillment of the objectives.

**How Do We Proceed From Here?**

Aug. 12 Mr. Kilough brought forward the administration’s proposals and recommendations of “how do we proceed from here” considering the passage of the resolution to rescind the 2007 relocation decision.

Mr. Kilough presented a seven-page document to the Council. It included a review of what the new Strategic Plan and Operation Plan address about having necessary facilities for our training and educational programs. Three options were then

presented with the understanding that the restoring of trust needs to be considered as part of the process of going forward.

The first option was to conduct a strategic facilities study. This would include a task force comprised of Council, administration and GCE representatives. This option has the advantage that using an outside consulting firm would satisfy any concerns about a lack of objectivity. One of the disadvantages is that this option could take a long time—up to two years.

The second option is to decide to build in the Cincinnati area. The advantages to this option are that we can move forward

faster, and it does not put the GCE through another relocation decision. A disadvantage is that it does not provide a comparative study of locations and, without a fair study, it could alienate the almost 50 percent of the GCE who favored the move to Texas.

The third option is to remodel the current facility while implementing the strategic facilities study (option 1). This option does not expand, but remodels the current building. It could meet the immediate needs for the next three to five years. This option would allow for the warehouse to be moved to a nearby, leased facility. The

disadvantage is that it does not provide for on-site housing for ABC and ministerial training, and it means investing money in the short term that we cannot count on being recovered when the facility is sold.

Mr. Kilough recommended the third option as giving us the best balance of choices and the greatest flexibility.

On Aug. 14, the final day of the August meetings, the Council, after much discussion, asked for more time to consider the options presented by the president on the “how do we proceed from here” proposal. Between now and the December meetings, Mr. Kilough will compile and then

present to the Council the premises for facilities-based training.

The Council also discussed the “alternate forum,” and asked the Ethics Committee to discuss the surrounding issues further. In other business, a resolution setting a timetable for the annual performance assessments of the president (two meetings before the anniversary of service) and treasurer and secretary (August meetings) was approved.

Several other Council items are covered in the “News at a Glance” section.

For complete Council reports, see <http://members.ucg.org/council/reports/>. **UN**

**President Reports on 2007-08 Fiscal Year**

In his President’s Unified Report to the Council of Elders Aug. 11, Clyde Kilough pointed out that this past fiscal year became a transitional year in which we began to apply the principles agreed to during the development of the new Strategic and Operation Plans.

**Financial Services**

We ended last year with a total income of just over \$23,478,000. While this was 6 percent under what was projected, it still represented an increase in income of approximately 2 percent over the previous year. Mr. Kilough said it is interesting to look at last year’s result in the context of the last five years. By recent trends last year was a disappointment. We enjoyed over 7 percent growth the two previous years and yet only 2 percent growth this past year. However, we still experienced close to 30 percent growth in income (over 5 percent compounded annually) over the past five years.

For example in 2002-03, we received \$18,188,808. In 2007-08, we received \$23,478,197 for an increase of \$5,289,389 (29.1 percent). Because we’ve had this increase in income over the past five years, we’ve been able to spend \$2,564,248 more on media. So 48 percent of the income growth was allocated to preaching the gospel.

Income so far this fiscal year has been flat, but this is good compared with the decrease we saw in May and June. Because we ended the last fiscal year with less than anticipated income growth, we will need to see a greater level of income growth this year, approximately 4 percent, to hit our budgeted number of \$24,500,000.

**Media and Communications Services**

Mr. Kilough stated that when the Operation Plan for the last fiscal year was first formulated in February 2007, many projections were made on the basis of past programs and past performance. However, as the Council began generating a new Strategic Plan, a great deal of discussion by a broad group of Council and administration members began to influence ongoing decisions.

This means that certain goals that had been set in the original 2007-08 Operation Plan were reconsidered and therefore not achieved as targeted. In some cases, the processes and programs began to be modified to produce better long-term results, but those changes will take time to bear fruit. A prime example of this transition is changing our proclamation focus from the traditional modes of broadcasting and printing to the rapidly developing Web.

We anticipate—even in the near term—far greater numbers of first contacts through the Internet than through any other means. They will also be generated at comparatively very low cost. In any event, we expect to use a wide variety of media tools in a comprehensive mix to reach our diverse and ever more segmented audience.

This transition year affected *The Good News* circulation projections. As one of the strategies indicates, we began to discuss the implementation of an annual, instead of biannual, renewal for *The Good News* to verify the commitment of readers and more efficiently use our resources. This renewal program will automatically reduce circulation amounts. We also made a conscious decision not to do a print ad campaign in the spring, hoping to secure subscriptions to *The Good News* through the Internet at lower cost. However, we had saturated our advertising opportunities on Google and Yahoo and new efforts to optimize our sites had not yet taken effect.

All previous efforts to assist the international areas with *The Good News* are ongoing and successful. In addition, we have begun posting to the Web subtitled material that is being translated into several languages.

There was a lot of discussion from Council members as to how we can keep the circulation level of *The Good News* growing. Mr. Kilough emphasized that we are not trying to cut the circulation level, but determining, by way of renewals, who is genuinely interested in receiving the magazine. We would love to build up the *GN*, but with the desire of having good-quality subscribers.

On the topic of booklets, Mr. Kilough mentioned that as a result of new postage regulations making it very expensive to mail our magazine-sized brochures, we had to put manpower and resources into converting those brochures to regular booklet sizes. Sixteen of our 33 titles were in the larger format and 14 were reformatted during the fiscal year. In many cases this allowed for fine tuning in editing and updating the material. The limited editorial staff was kept busy with this project and did a fine job with the conversions.

Mr. Kilough fielded questions from Council members about training writers. Our writers and editors are aging just as much as our pastors. We have done a study on what freelance writers are paid, and plans have to be implemented on how we institute a pay-

ment policy. Our Strategic Plan does state that we are to train media staff to highlight the uniqueness of the true gospel message.

In other media news, during the last fiscal year we created four new Web sites: [members.ucg.org](http://members.ucg.org) dedicated to internal Church information; [feast.ucg.org](http://feast.ucg.org) providing Feast information for members; [breakingfree.ucg.org](http://breakingfree.ucg.org) dealing with addictions, etc.; and [abc.ucg.org](http://abc.ucg.org) providing a resource for ABC students and other members.

We are also using the services of the Web site [www.dotsub.com](http://www.dotsub.com) to upload and add transcripts to our *Beyond Today* commentaries. Right now we have volunteers transcribing and translating our commentaries into German, Dutch, Spanish and Papiamentu (spoken on the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao).

There was also discussion about *Beyond Today*. We produced and aired 25 regular 30-minute programs in the past fiscal year. The number was lower than projected due to evaluation and experimentation exercises. Several months ago, with input from the Media Steering Group and others, we began to focus on ways to improve the *BT* program. Most of these new approaches aired, but showed no measurable difference in response. The most dramatic rise in *BT* response has been that coming from the Web.

In May and June, we conducted three separate focus-group evaluations of selected *BT* programs. The groups were entirely of members, one of men, one of women and one of ABC students. The results of these groups, both in the ratings questions and the comments, were mixed, but tilted toward the negative. Overall, the key elements were: The men’s group thought the programs were too disjointed and complex, with both too much material and too much in-speak. The women’s group found the programs just not interesting enough or compelling enough to get them to watch. The ABC group didn’t relate to the mix of presenters and guests. They also were emphatic that the whole feel was “not genuine.” This group felt the program would not appeal to their age group. They do not watch it online or elsewhere.

In June 2008, we asked the presenters to come in to do an in-depth evaluation of past programs and current approaches. Present for the discussion were Darris McNeely, Gary Petty, Steve Myers, Peter Eddington, Clay Thornton, Clint Porter, John LaBisoniere and Larry Salyer. After reviewing the focus group findings, some thought the focus groups were meaningless, as participants were Church insiders. Some thought the program is good enough to proceed to commercial television as is. Some thought *Beyond Today* has not improved substantially and that we need a breakthrough either in format, in subject matter and tone, or perhaps in presenter personality.

At this point in the discussion, some Council members made comments that the Council had viewed one program during the May meetings and gave it high marks. There was also a question asked if we’ll eventually use outside focus groups to give us their input, and the answer was yes.

Another question dealt with the unspent budgeted \$70,000 to test commercial TV. Mr. Kilough replied that this issue was brought to the Media Committee of the Council over a year ago, and it was decided at that time not to proceed with that test. Even now, there is no predominant opinion to proceed with testing. Some on the Council stated they would like to see us try commercial TV and see what happens. Mr. Kilough said he would take that suggestion into consideration.

Another question was: When will the Bible Reading Program be reinstated? Tom Robinson, the author, spent most of the year revising the 14 booklets, which took a lot of his time. It is hoped that the BRP can be renewed sometime in the future.

**Ministerial Services**

Mr. Kilough said we will continue to proceed with ministerial development and pastoral training. Some Council members asked how many potential hires are available. Richard Pinelli, who oversees this program, replied that we have a list of 12 to 15. All are elders who are currently assisting pastors in their local areas.

A few Council members asked if we are thinking of using local elders, under a full-time pastor, to help pastor congregations. Mr. Pinelli replied that most pastors are working with the elders, and some elders are already working 25 to 30 hours a week doing Church-related things. Some elders, though, can only do so much because of their age, health, job situation, etc.

U.S. Church attendance figures were given. Of the 216 congregations, 29 have an attendance of over 100 every week, and 42 have 20 or fewer attending each week. The average weekly attendance for the first six months of 2008 was 11,500.

Mr. Kilough then discussed the educational programs of the Church, which he said are one of the Church’s strongest suits. He emphasized the recent Youth Corps program in Jordan where Matthew and Mary Ann Bates spent the last 10 months. They represented the Church very well. The Jordanians have asked for more of our people to come and help. Five more young adults left for Jordan in August.



## From the Word

# Eat, Drink and Rejoice During the Feast...but Always Be a Good Example

■ How we use alcohol at the Feast can be a stumbling block to new members and can bring shame on the name of the Church.

by **Rex I. Sexton**

“Be careful...that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak” (1 Corinthians 8:9, New International Version). These words of wisdom and admonishment from the apostle Paul apply to every aspect of life and every day of the year, but perhaps are most vital during the Feast of Tabernacles.

### Karen's Story

Karen (not her real name) was an attractive young lady in her mid 20s who began attending God's Church several years ago. Even though she had attended only a couple of months, she was excited to attend her first Feast of Tabernacles and went to a popular site along with some members from her church area. She had high hopes of meeting other young adults and learning more about God's way of life.

After the Feast I was troubled to learn that she had returned home after only a few days at the Feast site. When we contacted her, the disappointment in her voice was obvious. She related how she had attended a young adults' get-together and was shocked by the amount of alcohol consumed and the obvious overdrinking. After two or three evenings of the same expe-

rience, she decided that this church was not for her. She has not attended services since.

I wish the account of Karen were made up. I also wish it were only a one-time occurrence and would never happen again. Unfortunately, we hear too often of get-togethers where abuse of alcohol has occurred, especially among young adults and singles. As a pastor and shepherd of God's people, it is deeply troubling to know of “little ones” who are offended (Matthew 18:6) by the poor example or weak character of Church members—who should know better.

### Our Example Is of Extreme Importance

Wine and other alcoholic beverages can be a blessing if used in moderation (Judges 9:13). We all know that the first recorded miracle of Jesus Christ was to turn water into wine at a wedding celebration (John 2:1-11).

We are given permission to consume “wine or similar drink” while keeping God's Feast of Tabernacles, but this is to be done in a godly way, knowing that we are in God's presence and we are keeping the Feast so we can “learn to fear the LORD your God always” (Deuteronomy 14:23, 26).

While keeping the Feast, God's people are on display as during no other time of the year. People in the communities where we meet take notice of what we do and what kind of people we are. Overall the reports that come back are very positive. Property managers at motels, restaurants and meeting facilities often rave about the excellent conduct of

our youth and the cooperation among our attendees. Observing Church members keeping the Feast may be the first contact some people have with the truth, so the example we set is of extreme importance.

While drunkenness is common in society today and is increasingly accepted on college campuses and among young adults, it is a sin that can keep you out of God's Kingdom.

Jesus warns us, “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with... drunkenness...and that day will close on you unexpectedly” (Luke 21:34, NIV). The references in Paul's writings that explicitly condemn abuse of alcohol are numerous. Galatians 5:19-21 is one place that includes drunkenness (along with murder, witchcraft and adultery) as a sin that will keep you out of God's Kingdom.

We need to understand that this is a very serious sin, not something that we can play around with and see just how close we can come to the line without crossing it.

### Self-Control and Brotherly Kindness

Drinking alcohol is an issue of self-control, something Christians are to be aware of and growing in. Peter admonished his followers, “Make every effort to add to your faith goodness...knowledge; and... self-control” (2 Peter 1:5, NIV). He also adds the qualities of “brotherly kindness” and “love” (verse 7). Knowing when to stop drinking, and perhaps even telling a friend that he or she has had enough, can be showing brotherly kindness and love.



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Years ago I heard a minister advise his congregation that setting a limit of at most two alcoholic drinks in an evening is a good benchmark. Over the years I have observed that this was excellent advice. (Of course, some people susceptible to alcoholism or abuse make the wise choice not to drink at all.)

The telltale symptoms of alcohol overuse, detailed for us in Proverbs 23:29-35, usually begin with the third drink. These behaviors cross the line of what God expects for us. Proverbs warns us not to be deceived by thinking we can keep drinking and not be affected. “Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1, NIV).

### Let Your Light Shine

Each of us should take some time to consider our example as we keep God's Holy Days. We will be hearing

God's Word brought to us in inspiring messages. We will enjoy beautiful accommodations, nice meeting rooms, Christian fellowship and sumptuous meals together. People outside of our group will be observing our actions, as will new ones in the faith who are attending for the first time.

How you conduct yourself will have an impact on the lives of others. Your responsibility is to make sure that your impact reflects well on God and His Church.

Why not memorize these words and keep them in mind as you keep the Feast of Tabernacles this year: “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16, NIV). **UN**

Rex Sexton is pastor of the Tacoma and Olympia, Washington, congregations.

## Take a Listening Heart to the Feast

■ God has invited us to His Feast of Tabernacles, and He will be pleased if we come with a hearing heart.

by **David Palmer**

When you see or hear the word *Feast*, what comes to mind? To members of the Church of God, the word relates to a wonderful festival, the biblical observance of the Feast of Tabernacles. But let's consider for a moment the word *feast* itself.

Most modern dictionaries will describe feast as a “joyful religious anniversary,” “an annual village festival” or “a sumptuous meal, especially in public.” The biblical expression in Leviticus 23:2, “feasts of the LORD,” emphasizes the importance



of the Feast as a festival observed as a fixed time or season, an assembly convened for a definite purpose.

*Easton's Bible Dictionary* (1897 edition) describes the word *feast* as “a mark of hospitality (Gen. 19:3; 2

Sam. 3:20; 2 Kings 6:23); occasions of domestic joy (Luke 15:23; Gen. 21:8); and the occasion of a marriage (Judg. 14:10; Gen. 29:22). Feasting was a part of the observances connected with the offering up of sacrifices (Deut. 12:6, 7; 1 Sam. 9:19; 16:3, 5), and with the annual festivals (Deut. 16:11) it was one of the designs of the greater solemnities, which required the attendance of the people at the sacred tent, that the oneness of the nation might be maintained and cemented together, by stately congregating in one place, and with one accord taking part in the same observance.”

The dictionary then states, “To keep the people's consciousness alive to God's way, to revive, strengthen, and perpetuate it, nothing could be so well adapted as these annual feasts.”

### Invited to Commune Spiritually

The phrase *keep the Feast* also encourages us to *commune spiritually*. In other words, as we travel each year to one of various Festival sites to keep this “anniversary,” we recognize that we are invited guests. We are not only drawn to a banquet of good food, fine drink and wonderful fellowship with other brethren who have made the same trek, but we also recognize that we have received an invitation from God Himself.

Not only does He want us to rejoice with the physical blessings that have been bestowed on us over the past year (Deuteronomy 14:22-26), but He wants us to commune spiritually with Him and with each other.

What exactly does that mean? How do we commune spiritually?

### A Listening Heart

Let's look at a biblical example. When Solomon replaced his father David on the throne of Israel, God appeared to Solomon in a dream. He said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" (1 Kings 3:5). Solomon asked for an understanding heart, better translated as a *hearing or listening heart*, that he might better judge God's people—that he might be a better king.

"The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing" (1 Kings 3:10). Solomon was blessed not only with the wisdom of a listening heart, but

with great physical blessings as well.

The lesson we learn is this. Not only do we participate in the Feast of Tabernacles for the physical meat, but for meat that will not perish, but will lead to everlasting life (John 6:27).

When you and I travel to the Feast this year, let's ask God for a *listening heart*, a heart willing to hear God's instruction. Remember what the apostle Paul wrote: "It pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

If we develop a determination to

attend the Feast with a listening heart, we will not only be in spiritual communication and drawing closer to God and Jesus Christ, but like Solomon we will find the physical blessings are much more enjoyable as well, as we draw closer to each other.

### A Feast of Fellowship

The Feast is a wonderful opportunity to rehearse the Kingdom of God, and since God communes with us spiritually, Tabernacles is a great occasion for us to commune with fellow brethren. The word *commune* merely means *fellowship*, and fellowship gives us the marvelous oppor-

tunity to apply some of Solomon's wisdom:

"A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!" (Proverbs 15:23). "Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24).

We will meet many personalities at the Feast—people who are quiet and shy, some who have a hard time communicating. If we put warm, friendly, encouraging conversation on our to-do list for the Feast this year, we can contribute to someone's Festival just by striking up friendly conversation.

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).

This year at the Feast, tune in your listening heart, then tune in to someone else's. What better way to get to know God than by getting to know someone else God has called. After all, you and that new person you commune with can be in the Kingdom of God together forever. So why not take the opportunity while at the Feast of Tabernacles to get acquainted! **UN**

*David Palmer is pastor of the Vancouver and Vancouver Island, British Columbia, congregations.*

## "Take Your Sandals Off"—Why?

■ Do we bring the world's culture into God's worship? Or do we worship God in the way He wants?

by Graemme Marshall

When God called to Moses from the burning bush, the first thing God told him was, "Take your sandals off" (Exodus 3:5). Some 40 years later when God appeared to Joshua as the Israelites besieged Jericho, He again said, "Take your sandal off your foot" (Joshua 5:15).

What was God's purpose in both of these incidents? And how does it relate to us in God's Church today?

### Is God Too Old School?

Why would God tell Moses and Joshua to take off their sandals? Is God too picky, too punctilious, too fastidious for our modern generation?

As Joshua was surveying the besieged city, he was met by an armed Man. Boldly walking up to Him, Joshua asked whether He was "for us or for our adversaries" (Joshua 5:13; 6:1-2). This Commander of the Lord's army was God. When Joshua heard that, he immediately fell on his face to the earth and worshipped. Moses had done the same at the burning bush. Both times God said the ground they were standing on had become holy from His direct presence, and so they were to take off their sandals.

### A Sign of Reverence and Respect

Taking off your sandals was like the old custom of a man taking off his hat when entering a building or greeting a lady—it was a token of respect.

The ground was holy because of God's presence. People were to approach God with solemnity and humility. Taking off their sandals expressed an inward reverence through an outward behavior in their worship. Showing such respect avoids anything casual, sloppy or rude.

Some Eastern religions today still require bare feet when entering their temples. Anciently the Greeks, in the worship of Diana and Jupiter, required worshippers to take off their shoes (*Adam Clarke's Commentary*, Exodus 3:5). A common custom in the Orient and for many in North America is to take off your shoes when entering a person's home.

### God Has a High Standard for Approaching Him

When God established rules and regulations for the priests and Levites in the service of the tabernacle, He specified a lofty standard of propriety. Male priestly dress had to ensure no unsightly flesh areas be exposed (Exodus 28:42).

The high priest had bells on his garment. *Adam Clarke's Commentary* says: "His sound shall be heard—The bells were doubtless intended to keep up the people's attention to the very solemn and important office which the priest was then performing, that they might all have their hearts engaged in the work; and at the same time to keep Aaron himself in remembrance that he ministered before Jehovah, and *should not come into his presence without due reverence*" (emphasis added).

Disrespect (possibly helped along by the influence of alcohol) brought the death of Aaron's sons who ignored due procedure, along with the influence of alcohol (Leviticus 6:13; 10:1-10). Sloppy service mixed with alcohol for self-aggrandizement was unacceptable.

God decorated Israel with jewelry (Ezekiel 16:10-13). But in times of sin and God's wrath, they were to take off their ornaments to show evidence of contrite hearts, humility and reverence (Exodus 33:4-6).

### Do Rules Matter?

Does sincerity or zeal make up for lack of obedience? King David learned a hard lesson in neglecting how God's presence was to be approached. When he was finally established as king in Jerusalem, David determined to bring up the Ark of the Covenant. He was sin-

cere; he was zealous. They even made a new cart to bring it from Abinadab's home (2 Samuel 6:1-5). And David had harps, cymbals and stringed instruments to praise God.

Then—the oxen stumbled and rocked the cart, and Uzzah put out his hand to steady the Ark from falling over. He may have done this quite involuntarily. But at that instant God struck him dead! And David was angry about the tragedy. So they left the Ark at another home while David sought guidance on what to do.

With reflection and study David came to see he had been ignorant of God's clear Levitical rules for transporting the Ark. After thoroughly addressing correct procedures (1 Chronicles 15:2-15), David then successfully brought the Ark of God up to Jerusalem.

### God's Calling Is a High One

How does this relate to us today? God is the "same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). What He established for Moses at the burning bush was no different 40 years later for Joshua at Jericho. Since He is the same today, it means that when we approach God we should have similar reverence as a mark of respect in our worship.

Of course we are not directly in God's presence as Moses and Joshua were. However, we do know the scriptural commands to assemble (Hebrews 10:25; Leviticus 23:2), and the Church all through its history has believed that when we come to Sabbath services and God's Holy Days, we are spiritually entering into God's presence. So, the question for us is:

Do we bring the world's culture into God's worship? Or do we worship God in the way He has provided?

God's worship requirements for the New Testament era are taught through His Church. We show reverence for God and His Church by observing biblical rules, customs and traditions. Occasionally some seek to justify a more lax attitude by claiming that modern culture



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is casual and relaxed. Summer weather can be blamed too by saying it is hot and surely God would want us to feel comfortable when we worship. We know, too, that it is common in church meetings in today's world to see a variety of formal, casual and even sloppy dress. The same is true for weddings and funerals, even the opera. But these examples are of this world, and we are called *out* of the world to reflect God's culture.

Does Church dress matter? Do hairstyles matter? Does it matter how we dress publicly to present special music? These questions are well answered in previous articles now available on our Web site:

"Etiquette at Sabbath Services" (Doug Horchak, *United News*, August 2006, p. 7, [www.ucg.org/un/un0608/etiquette.htm](http://www.ucg.org/un/un0608/etiquette.htm)).

"What Kind of Clothing Is Appropriate to Appear Before God?" (Richard Pinelli, *United News*, September/October 2006, p. 7, [www.ucg.org/un/un0609/clothingappropriate.htm](http://www.ucg.org/un/un0609/clothingappropriate.htm)).

(These are also included in the United Church of God Welcome

Package available to all Canadian congregations. It is intended to help new people who attend with us to know what God's culture requires at church services. It is also a good review for the rest of us, especially at the Festival of Tabernacles.)

### Our High, Holy and Heavenly Calling

The apostle Paul explained that the calling of God is a high and holy calling (Philippians 3:14; 2 Timothy 1:9). When we come before His presence at Sabbath services and Holy Days, do we bring the world's culture with us? Or do we come appropriate in dress and attitude as God intends? Our calling is truly from heaven (Hebrews 3:1), and this demands that we approach God reverently, respectfully and humbly.

So why did God tell Moses and Joshua to take off their sandals? When in the presence of God, we are to worship Him respectfully His way. **UN**

*Graemme Marshall is pastor of the Ottawa, Ontario, and Montreal, Quebec, congregations.*

# The Worldwide Crisis of Overweight and Obesity

■ The world around us is awakening to the fact that many of its citizens are overweight and increasingly obese. We in God's Church also need to be aware of our health, as well as the health of our children. The consequences of failing to do so are dire indeed!

by Cecil E. Maranhville

Faced with a national crisis with 23 percent of their schoolchildren overweight or obese, British schools are weighing students this September and then sending home letters to inform parents if their child is "overweight" or "very overweight."

It is difficult to hear about this delicate subject, but we need to do so. This isn't a crisis for Great Britain alone, but literally for much of the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) has said obesity is "the biggest unrecognized health problem in the world" ("Obesity a World-Wide Hazard," BBC, Dec. 22, 2000).

The U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality released a shocking study in August, declaring it's possible that "every American adult could be overweight 40 years from now" (Amy Norton, Reuter's Health, Aug. 6, 2008, emphasis added throughout). The same study, taken from the journal *Obesity*, said present trends show that 86 percent of American adults would be overweight by 2030, with 51 percent of the total being obese.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that more than one in every three American adults is obese right now, but the WHO puts the figures even higher (see chart below). Obviously, many of our Church members and their families could be affected by this crisis.

In a world constantly concerned with war, this might hardly seem worth worrying about, unless you consider the costs. Even aside from the human costs, the financial impact in the United States alone of dealing with health issues caused by overweight and obesity is over \$130 billion a year. The costs will only rise, greatly burdening the health-care system.

"The sheer magnitude of the... problem is staggering," warned Catherine Le-Galès Camus, WHO assistant director of Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health in a UN News Service release (Sept. 22, 2005).

The world is changing. Increasing wealth enables millions to choose good-tasting food that is high in fat and low in nutrients. At the same time, urbanization and technological advances result in increasingly sedentary types of work and lifestyles. Consequently, up to 1.6 billion people are overweight. And the WHO projects that 700 million of the world's population will be obese by 2015.

## Increasingly a problem of children

One of the biggest problems faced by the overweight is type 2 diabetes, something that until recently mainly concerned only senior citizens, but not any longer. The WHO estimated in 2004 that one in 10 schoolchildren worldwide was overweight. In 2007, they said that at least 22 million children under the age of 5 were overweight. Type 2 diabetes was unheard of in children only 20 years ago, but now it is common and increasing rapidly.

"Childhood obesity is like a massive tsunami headed toward the United States," warns David Ludwig, pediatric endocrinologist and director of the obesity program at Children's Hospital in Boston (Nanci Hellmich, "Obesity Threatens Life Expectancy," *USA Today*, March 16, 2005).

Overweight and obesity could actually cause the life expectancy in the United States to head downward for the first time since the government began to keep statistics in 1900!

According to the CDC, "Since 1980, the percentage of overweight children [in the United States] ages 6 to 11 has doubled, and the percentage of overweight adolescents ages 12 to 19 has tripled."

One of the biggest reasons for childhood obesity in United States is the fact that so many children eat out; the typical restaurant meal has twice as many calories as a meal prepared at home.

Another problem is how aggressively weight-causing foods are being marketed directly to children. The Federal Trade Commission reported in early August that "food companies spent \$1.6 billion in advertising their products to children in 2006. Producers of carbonated sodas led the way followed by fast-food restaurants and makers of breakfast cereals" ("Childhood Obesity," *Watertown Daily Times*, Aug. 6, 2008).

Another factor is lack of sleep. A new study shows a profound connection between a lack of deep, restorative sleep (commonly called REM, for "rapid eye movement") and a tendency toward becoming overweight. "The children who slept 22 minutes less each night tended to be overweight. Children who slept one hour less were twice as likely to be overweight. [With]...one less hour of REM sleep...the children were three times more likely to be overweight" (Jane Akre, "Lack of Deep Sleep Linked to Adolescent Obesity," *InjuryBoard.com*, Aug. 6, 2008).

## Health risks to the overweight

What problems occur when the blood has too much sugar in it? The body gains weight. Being overweight triggers a host of serious problems, including:

- Type 2 diabetes.
- Heart disease and stroke.
- Cancer (esophagus, colon, kidney, uterus and breast).
- Sleep apnea.
- Osteoarthritis.
- Gallbladder disease.
- Fatty liver disease (including cirrhosis).

The good news is that you can lower your health risk by losing as little as 10 to 20 pounds.

Conversely, it takes only 20 to 30 extra pounds to cause a significant loss in the body's ability to use insulin properly. Doctors are warning people to take immediate action when their blood sugar count exceeds 100 to stave off these health problems and to extend their lives.

## How the body processes sugar

Let's get into a little science about how the human body processes our modern high-carbohydrate diets. Our bodies break down carbohydrates into simple glucose, which the blood-

stream carries to the muscle and fat cells to burn or to store for future energy needs.

Insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas, accompanies the glucose and helps the cells process it. The insulin attaches to receptors in the cell wall, and its presence activates other receptors to absorb the glucose. In a healthy person, the pancreas releases the right amount of insulin needed to process whatever food he consumes. Without insulin, a person could literally starve, even though he is eating plenty of food, because his body wouldn't be able to put it to use.

The type of food we eat makes a difference in insulin output too. "Fast foods" typically demand rapid production of more insulin, which is followed by a "crash" of blood glucose levels a few hours later, causing a sensation of weakness and hunger.

Think of a fire fueled by handfuls of dry grass. The grass burns quickly, causing a sudden flash of energy output, but followed by a rapid reduction in light or heat. Contrast that with a chunk of wood that burns more slowly and puts out energy for a longer period.

Continuing the analogy, the rapid-burning fuels include refined carbohydrates, such as bagels, white bread, white rice, regular pasta, sodas and sweets. Starchy vegetables, including potatoes, work in a similar way. Diets with much of these types of food are terribly unhealthy, stressing the body and encouraging overeating.

Good eating is not a matter of simply cutting out these foods, but rather of consuming a balanced diet. The clear trend in the developed and developing world alike is toward diets loaded with these potentially harmful foods. Combined with jobs and lifestyles that are ever less active, we see the result in the alarming worldwide weight crisis.

In overweight or inactive people, cells do not respond quickly or efficiently to insulin's presence. This results in the pancreas pumping out more insulin to compensate. Eventually, the pancreas is overworked and cannot supply enough insulin. When the cells aren't taking the glucose from the bloodstream, the effect is a rise in blood sugar.

## Glorify God in Your Body

God instructs us on eating and exercise habits. We are to take responsibility for keeping our bodies as healthy as possible, respecting the fact that God actually holds us accountable for doing so.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit



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who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." That is, we are not free to do whatever we please with our health!

Become attuned to your eating and your activity habits. When hunger strikes, is it because you need food or because your body isn't using food properly? Too often, it's the latter.

Eating better obviously means eating at home more often and being more careful when eating out. Soft drinks are prime culprits, for they are much-desired by children, but high in sugar and empty of nutrients. Parents need to make their child's sleeping environment and the period leading up to bedtime as pleasant as possible to ensure quality sleep. They also need to see that their children are physically active and not spending all of their leisure time with electronic entertainment.

The best way is to set a good example for their children, as well as to do these things as a family!

We need to feed our children the foods that their bodies will use, rather than "fast foods" that the body burns quickly. And we must keep our children active! Doing so will enrich and perhaps even save their lives. For every two hours a day in front of the TV, the risk of developing diabetes goes up 14 percent, writes Hallie Levine in *Redbook* ("Diabetes Crisis: Are You Next?" <http://redbook.ivillage.com>).

Exercise provides obvious benefits of burning off the calories we take in, and it is especially important in an increasingly inactive lifestyle. A lesser-known benefit is that exercise increases the cells' sensitivity to insulin, triggering the consequent processing of blood sugar.

We have some excellent material that can help you, including:

- Our booklet *Making Life Work*.
- An article from *The Good News*, "Follow a Healthy—and Biblical—Diet" ([www.gnmagazine.org/issues/gn43/biblicaldiet.htm](http://www.gnmagazine.org/issues/gn43/biblicaldiet.htm)).
- An article from *Vertical Thought* that is oriented toward youth, "Prepare for a Long, Healthy Life" ([www.verticalthought.org/issues/ym04/healthylife.htm](http://www.verticalthought.org/issues/ym04/healthylife.htm)). **UN**

## World Health Organization 2005 Obesity Statistics and Projections for 2015

Here is a sampling of current WHO stats from some nations in which we have members. The figures represent the percentage of the population and are for the year 2005 (source: [www.who.int/en/](http://www.who.int/en/)):

Country	Males 30+	Females 30+
Australia	27.0	32.2
Canada	28.4	29.5
Germany	28.8	28.7
Guatemala	21.6	37.5
Mexico	30.3	44.2
Peru	17.8	41.7
United Kingdom	29.5	31.7
United States	42.3	48.6

Compare this with the WHO projections for 2015:

Country	Males 30+	Females 30+
Australia	36.6	41.4
Canada	32.4	35.0
Germany	33.9	33.1
Guatemala	34.3	52.1
Mexico	43.8	57.4
Peru	29.9	55.4
United Kingdom	34.6	36.4
United States	57.2	60.3

# A Spiritual Bucket List

■ Do you remember what it was like to dream as a child? To imagine yourself a doctor, a nurse, a cowboy or fireman? What happened to those dreams? It's not too late to recapture the wonder that dreams can inspire.

by **Darris McNeely**

*The Bucket List* is a recent Hollywood movie starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. It is a story about two men, both with terminal cancer, who meet in the hospital room they share while being treated. The Freeman character, faced with his own mortality, begins writing a list of things he would like to do and places he'd like to see before he "kicks the bucket." The Nicholson character sees the list and provides the money and means for the two men to start accomplishing the goals. The story progresses as the men realize their ambitions and cross the items off their list.



Hiking the Grand Canyon from rim to rim fulfilled one of the author's long-held dreams (photos by Darris McNeely)

But along the way something happens in the story that elevates the plot to more than two men jetting around the world and seeing the grand sites.

## A Dream List

The idea of a "bucket list" is nothing new. I first heard about such a list of lifetime goals while I was a student at Ambassador College in the early 1970s. Once a year the college would bring in an explorer named John Goddard to lecture and show us a film about one of his daring world adventures.

When John Goddard was a young man of 15, he wrote out a list of 127 adventures and accomplishments he wanted to do. He wanted to travel the Nile, read all the classics, study native medicine and bring back useful ones. He spent his life doing what he wrote on that list.

From what I can discover, he accomplished most—if not all—the items on his list before succumbing to cancer. I had the opportunity to give Mr. Goddard and his family a tour of the Ambassador College campus one day when he was

visiting for the filming of a television program. He was a delightful man to be around.

But I did not pick up on the idea of creating my own list of adventures till several years went by. Then a good friend of mine, John Robinson, gave a sermon one day about the idea of having dreams and building a "dream list" of things to see and do in your life. John had read a book with that idea and was motivated to share the thought with others. It was then I caught on to the idea, and it has made a big difference in my life.

The idea is simple. What if you could do, have and be anything you could think of? What would that be? What would it include? If you were assured of success and had unlimited time, talent, money, knowledge, confidence and support from your family, what would you like to do with your life?

## Dream Again

That's it. But why is this important? I think it is a vital key to making life work in a satisfying manner without any regrets. Dreaming lets us live a large life

filled with meaning. It is a key to recapturing the imagination of childhood and attaching it to the realities of adult life.

When I was a child I did a lot of dreaming. I used to dream about being a cowboy or a soldier or a superhero. I would dress up in a costume and dream I was anything that caught my imagination. It may have been a movie or a television show I had seen that day. And for the next few days I would be that larger than life person or hero, that is, until I saw someone else I wanted to be.

But somewhere in my life I quit dreaming. I don't remember when or just how it happened. Maybe someone discouraged me and told me to "grow up and get real." Maybe it was just the pressure to conform to someone else's image of life. Maybe it was just the reality of everyday life, working and dealing with human nature, that caused my dreams to evaporate.

There is an ad line that says, "Life comes at you fast." It is true in many ways. But before it gets completely away from you, pick up your pen and paper and start dreaming again.

## Dreams in the Bible

I feel this idea of dreaming has a basis in the Bible. There we see examples of many dreams or visions where God would show His will or part of His plan to men. One of the most stirring dreams was that of Joseph when he dreamed of his future role in saving his family.

Genesis 37 says, "Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers... 'please hear this dream which I have dreamed'" (verses 5-6). Joseph's dream was of his brothers and father bowing down and serving him. His decision to tell his brothers did not go over well. The hatred and envy generated by this revelation led in a roundabout way to the fulfillment of the dream.

Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and wound up in Egypt as a steward in the home of Potiphar, a high government official. One intrigue led to another, and God gave Joseph the ability to understand dreams. This gift eventually landed him before Pharaoh, who himself had had a dream.

Pharaoh's dreams of fat corn devoured by lean corn and fat cows devoured by skinny cows had him and his counselors baffled. Joseph was brought from prison to stand before Pharaoh. His interpretation told Pharaoh to expect seven years of plentiful harvest followed by seven years of severe famine. He told the leader of Egypt to find a man to prepare for what was to come.

Pharaoh saw the right man standing before him. "Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.' And Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.'

"Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, 'Bow the knee!' So he set him over all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:39-43).

## Dreams Frame a Life

At age 30 Joseph was in charge of a massive national "homeland security" program for Egypt! God had moved events to this end and Joseph's "dream" was about to come to pass. Years later, after preparing Egypt for the famine and his brothers coming down to buy grain, Joseph reveals himself in an emotional scene.

What is important to understand is Joseph's conclusion about all that had happened to him.

"I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life... So now it was not you who sent me here, but God" (Genesis 45:4-5, 8).

Throughout his odyssey Joseph was sustained by his faith in God. Perhaps the dream God gave him as a young man played a part in this. At some point



Large personal goals are always shaped in the context of our overarching goal—the Kingdom of God

Joseph put it all together and understood that his life had always been in the hands of God and all that had happened to him was of God's design. Joseph had accepted the dream and yielded his life to God. The dream framed his life and became an overarching vision that sustained him and drove him forward.

God has given us a dream, a vision, of His eternal Kingdom. It is the goal of our life and is what drives us forward, giving us purpose and meaning. Like Joseph's dream, it molds and shapes our life. Our own "dreams" have a way of shaping our life in large and meaningful ways.

Our overarching dream of the Kingdom of God defines a very large life. God's Word gives us definition and clarity on our quest for the Kingdom. This vision of the Kingdom should help us define a large and exciting life filled with accomplishment and meaning.

We are preparing for a role as a king and priest in the coming government of God. If we really believe that, we will effectively translate it into not only a life of faith but a life of physical accomplishment in preparation for the world to come.

This future reality should fire us with ambition to use every ounce of life with passion. I think this begins with having dreams. No matter how old you are, take time to dream—to recapture a spark of ambition in life, to make your life work at a high level.

## My Dream List

Recently I traveled to the Grand Canyon in Arizona and accomplished something I have wanted to do for more than 11 years. Along with a group of friends, I entered the canyon from the North Rim and traversed the whole expanse, more than 24 miles, and came out on the South Rim two days later. My "rim to rim" experience was the fulfillment of a "dream," a long-held desire to do something big and important to me. It was a moment of satisfaction when I crossed this item off my "dream list"—mission accomplished!

Years ago I constructed a list of things I wanted to do and places I wanted to see in my life. I have been working on the list ever since. There are several big projects on the list, and having done this latest hike has motivated me to examine the list again with renewed energy.

What's next? There are a few big

trips to places that hold an attraction to me on the list. God willing, I will see them in the coming years. But I have added some other dreams to my list that are not solely centered on my ambitions.

Time and events, perhaps a bit of maturity, have tempered my dreams. I now want to do something big and good for other people. I want to leave something behind that is more than a list of things with just a line drawn through them. Putting in place some large foundation stones that serve others for a long time is now at the top of my list.

## Start Your Dream List

God has given us a very large "dream" of His coming Kingdom to replace the failed kingdoms and dreams of man. It is a dream of a world at peace, with everyone learning of His ways that lead to cooperation and stability. No more broken systems that lead to the cycles of human suffering and pain. It is a dream, a vision, that will come to pass. It is what frames a worthy life of seeking the right goal.

My life has been framed by this dream of the Kingdom of God. It has guided every major decision of my life. It is the one dream that I pursue each day. It is likely yours as well. Christ told His disciples to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). This is the one dream to put at the top of your personal "bucket list." Framing your life with the hope of the Kingdom of God will shape your life toward the one great purpose God has planned for you.

I am hard at work pursuing the dreams on my list. If you haven't taken the time to start your list, I encourage you to do it now. Write down on a piece of paper the dreams you want to accomplish in your life. Doing this is a forward-thinking approach that projects you into the future. It helps you break free of the limitations that you, or others, have put on yourself. Writing your dreams down in a list is a commitment. It helps you crystallize your thoughts and focus.

Take some time for yourself and create a list of things you want to see or do to create a broad and meaningful life. I guarantee it will be a life-changing exercise for you. **UN**

# Treasure Digest

## What I Learned From ABC

I have never been an ABC student, but I have had the opportunity to get to know the students who come through the program.

The mail room where I work is right across the hall from the ABC classroom. This gives me the opportunity to interact with the students on a daily basis. We share the same lunchroom, and I see them in the hall. Many students have also volunteered to help out in the mail room. I also try to attend some of their socials.

By being able to interact with the students, I have come to really appreciate the value of ABC and the impact it has on their lives.

There are two things that seem to help round out the students' spiritual growth. The first is the opportunity to study deeply into God's Word for hours every day. The second comes from interacting with each other, the instructors, the staff and the local congregation.

Students come to ABC from different backgrounds and with different personalities. Some students are extremely friendly, while some are extremely shy.

It is the intertwining of studies of the Bible,



the socials, the work projects and the interactions with the staff and dedicated instructors that produces a higher level of growth by the time ABC is over. If the students take full advantage of ABC, the rewards are priceless!

I have been inspired to see students reaching out to encourage those who have a harder time fitting in and drawing them into the group! Seeing students' lives transformed during the year proves what a great value this program is. God has greatly blessed students who have attended ABC.

This wonderful ABC program is just a more intense, but smaller scale, version of what God is doing with all of us. He has called us from many different backgrounds, with different personalities and talents, and has placed us in a classroom of life! Just like the ABC students, little by little God is transforming our lives.

At graduation at the end of the ABC year, the students walk across the stage to receive their diplomas and congratulations. They will remember a year of hard work, endurance, fun, working out personality differences and learning a lot! Hopefully their relationship with God is deeper. The bond they develop with one another will last for years to come.

All of us long for our graduation—the day when God will say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your Lord."

No, I cannot overestimate the value of this great ABC program and the impact it has on those who come through it. Nor can I overestimate what God is doing with all of us in the larger classroom of life—in the Body of Christ!

Janet Treadway  
Cincinnati North, Ohio, congregation

## Turning the Hearts . . . Enjoy the Feast With Your Family

The Feast of Tabernacles is an exciting time. It is like getting more than two months of Sabbath services in eight days. It is a time of renewing old acquaintances and making new friends. It is a time of devotion and dedication to God's great plan of salvation in picturing the wonderful world tomorrow and the subsequent resurrections.

Service to our fellow brethren is enjoined and appreciated. Singing praises to God in the chorale or instructing children in their lessons at the Feast are noteworthy efforts. Ushering, setup and cleanup are important service opportunities, but taking care of your family is also very important. We must *not* forget that enjoyment at the Feast *also* needs to include our families!

In Deuteronomy 14:26, an inspired Moses wrote, "You shall rejoice, you and your household." We parents have God's instruction to bring enjoyment to our families while we go to worship God at the Feast.

What are some suggestions to add to the enjoyment of the family?

- Make time for your family. Too many meals in fancy restaurants with only adult conversation can be a recipe for boredom for the children. Neglecting the family sitting at the end of the table is no way to bring enjoyment to your children.
- Do something unique with the family. Horseback riding together, playing miniature golf, visiting a historic location, hiking to a beautiful vista or dining at a unique restaurant can give a memorable experience that helps the family bond together.
- Buy your children gifts. Some parents have a gift for each child on each day of the Feast.
- Sometimes let the children select the restaurant. Giving each person in the family the choice for a particular lunch means he or she will feel included in the decision making for the family.
- Give your children some money to spend as they desire. This also adds to the enjoyment. Then exercise the character to leave the decision as to what the children want to buy up to them. Watch them enjoy their selections.
- Take photos of your experiences to help remember them afterward.
- Collect memorabilia to put into a scrapbook or photo album or PowerPoint presentation when you return.
- Speak often of how it will be in the wonderful world tomorrow.
- As a family, do something nice for some unsuspecting individuals during the Feast.
- Tell your family members how much you love and appreciate them.

Please make your own list or borrow some ideas from the one above. But remember to rejoice with your family at the Feast! God's instruction in Leviticus 23:40 is, "You shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days" (and the eighth day as well). Let's enjoy the Feast with our families!

Gary E. Antion



## Breathtaking Love— God's Love

I always enjoy hearing new parents talk about their new child. Their eyes light up and they have stories that make me visualize their great joy and love for the baby. As the child grows, the love a parent has for him or her grows to deeper levels. I have seen this firsthand in my family.

My husband and I frequently talk about our girls and how much we love them. I can see the love my husband has for his daughters. Many times during conversations I tell him that he would swim the deepest ocean, crawl through the most treacherous forest and cross the hottest desert for our girls. It is beautiful to see the love he has for them. Nothing, short of death, could keep him from coming to the aid of our girls. Sometimes it is breathtaking.

I think of Paul's question in Romans 8:35: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Then in verses 38 and 39 he tells us. "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Every parent can see how that scripture can take your breath away.

A personal experience that always brings God's love for us to my mind happened one year when our family was on the way to the Feast of Tabernacles. We had a flight layover. My husband, two small daughters and I were in a gift shop at the airport. We were just trying to make the time pass.

My husband signaled to me that he was going

to the restroom. I was in the shop with our girls. The little one was around 9 years old. I turned around one second and she was gone. My heart sank. I tried to stay calm while I gave a description of my daughter to the sales clerk. She had not seen her and seemed rather disinterested in my plight.

I was rapidly becoming frantic. I asked other patrons in the shop if they had seen my child. No one could help me. Absolutely no one had seen her. I ran out into the corridor and started scanning the area. My eyes were quickly filling with tears of panic. It must have only been a few minutes but it seemed like hours.

Finally, I saw her! She had decided to follow her father to the bathroom without letting me know. I immediately burst into sobbing tears. The breath went out of me. It had been one of the worst moments of my life. My love and concern for my child was pushed by emotion to the forefront of my entire being.

When I think of that event I am reminded again of how much God loves us. The love God has for us is magnified exponentially compared to the love we have for our children. In Mat-

thew 7:7-11 Jesus tells us that the good things we give (and do for) our kids are so small compared to the good things He wants to give us.

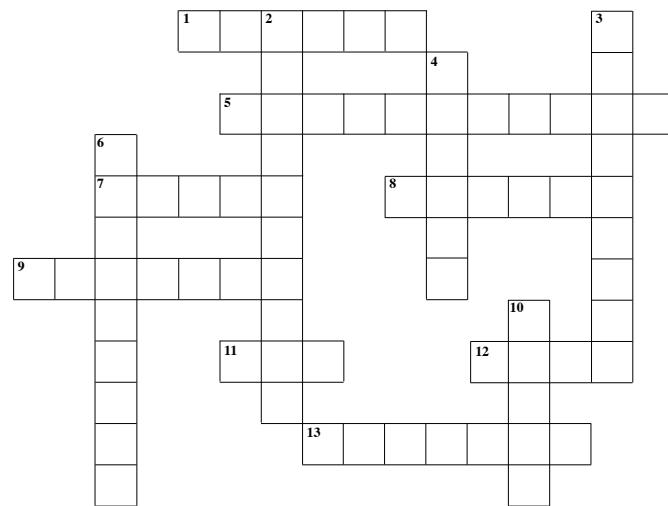
God has set up a family unit to give us a glimpse of His immeasurable love for His children. He

is our Father, and He will do much more than swim the deepest ocean, crawl through the most treacherous forest and cross the hottest desert for us. It is truly *breathtaking!*

Camille Ballo  
Fort Myers, Florida, congregation



## Children's Corner Isaiah's Prophecy About Christ



Choose a word from Isaiah 9:6-7 (New King James Version) to match the clue and place it in the correct space in the crossword above.

**Across**

1. Powerful.
5. Goes on forever.
7. A state of peace because of law.
8. Where a king sits.
9. What a king rules.
11. Opposite of beginning.

12. Enthusiasm.

13. Fairness.

**Down**

2. System of leadership for organizing people.
3. Very good.
4. Goes with mother.
6. One who gives advice.
10. Opposite of war.

Shelby Faith, St. Louis, Missouri,  
congregation



## Local Church Updates

### Brethren From North Carolina and West Virginia Meet on Banks of New River

Aug. 8 to 10, brethren from Hickory and Greensboro, North Carolina, and Princeton, West Virginia, gathered for a weekend retreat on the beautiful grounds



Brethren from three congregations meet in Virginia (photo by Don Mater)

of Camp Dickenson located on the banks of the New River near Fries, Virginia.

The weekend was kicked off with a Friday evening Bible study near the river's edge, with light provided by a bonfire and several torch stands. Pastor Ron Kelley compared our Christian lives to the characteristics of the river.

After a delightful Sabbath brunch, we gathered in the main lodge for Sabbath services with 47 in attendance. After a wiener roast by the river, Saturday night was capped off with a sing-along of a variety of our favorite songs.

Sunday's activities were highlighted by a four-hour canoe trip down the New River. God blessed us with incredibly beautiful weather for the entire weekend, and we all agreed this was definitely an event worth planning again for next year.

Ron Kelley

### Brethren in Hawaii Celebrate Festivals

"Skip" Miller, an elder from San Diego, California, and his wife, Suzanne, arrived on the Big Island of Hawaii for the Passover. Twelve members and one observer were present at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Al Gordon for the ceremony. Among those in attendance were Mr. and Mrs. James Lum, deacon and deaconess from Honolulu, joined by Big Islanders from the east and west coasts. By means of the telephone hookup, two other couples on Maui were virtually able to be together with us. At Mr. Miller's direction, all the male attendees were assigned to read a certain portion of chapters 15, 16 and 17 of John's Gospel.

Our population grew by two visitors from the southern coast for the Night to Be Much Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread services. The festive dinner, including lamb, was prepared by Vera Gordon and Sherry Ellis. It was a sumptuous meal.

The Last Day of Unleavened Bread, attendance on the Orchid Isle (as Hawaii

is also known) was nine. The Millers were in the presence of four attendees on Maui for that day's message.

For Pentecost weekend, 17 attended the weekly Sabbath, June 7. We were pleased to greet our pastor, Mario Seiglie, and his wife, Caty, from Garden Grove, California. Besides Chuck and Mary Smith, others from neighboring islands also returned: the Lums (Oahu); Mr. and Mrs. Ed Coughlin and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Kenknight (Maui). Big Island of Hawaii residents comprised the remainder of our small group.

The following day, Pentecost, the number grew by an additional two persons. Between services, this reporter played several hymns, as well as other European songs, on his accordion. Fellowship was enjoyed by everyone.

On the 1,977th anniversary of God's New Testament Church, we were reminded how to keep God's Spirit alive within us daily while we are still in our developmental stage; admonished, in this world, to make the best music possible, like a Steinway piano, when praying; given keys to have a more effective prayer life; asked whether we have the joy of the Holy Spirit; and taught to stay on course like a gyroscope, especially with the fruits of the Spirit. In God's Kingdom, no longer influenced by Satan, we will be filled completely with His Holy Spirit.

Our gracious hosts, the Smiths, deacon and deaconess from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, shared their Hawaiian home during the weekend, and provided us with two evening barbecues. Once again, as last year, all 17 of us dined at Il Pescatore, a restaurant in downtown Hilo.

*Aloha nui loa ke Akua*—very much Christian love—from the Hawaiian Islands.

Johnny Kretz

### Young Adults Go Hiking in Oregon

On the weekend of July 25 to 27, an adventurous group of 18 young adults, teens and adults set out on a backpacking trip into the forests of the Cascade Mountain Range in Oregon. The hike was sponsored by the Salem, Oregon, congregation, and there were also people from the Portland, Eugene and Roseburg,



Backpackers pause for posterity (photo by Jamie Robinson)

Oregon, congregations. High spirits, dried fruit and mosquitoes were plentiful on this fun-filled mountain journey.

The group camped at Fir Lake near the boundary of the Mt. Jefferson wilderness

area. Most meals were shared communally, with fun and fellowship including a Friday night Bible study, fireside hymn singing, a Sabbath message by David Love and a late night of stargazing. The group hopes to return on a similar trip next year.

Sabrina Koester

### Fort Wayne Honors Senior Citizens

The Fort Wayne, Indiana, congregation honored all 23 of its senior citizens at a special brunch before services the Sabbath of June 21. The men cooked up scrambled eggs, cheesy eggs, southwestern eggs and turkey sausage. The youth happily served fruit cups, assorted rolls and drinks.

After the brunch, pastor Darris McNeely put forth to the congregation "get to know you" questions that relating to each senior citizen. When the question was answered and the senior identified, the youth presented the senior with a teddy bear holding a box of chocolate goodies.

After the brunch, church services began with a very happy congregation. The sermon topic was on the biblical precept of honoring the elderly. The whole Sabbath was so positive and successful the congregation plans to do this again. A link to photos is on the announcement page at [www.UCGFortWayne.org](http://www.UCGFortWayne.org).



From left are Lucy Mason, Ellen Harrington, server Jennifer Griggs, Marie Welch, Richard Weisz, elder Gary Nielander and server Kendall Hermann (photo by Scott Moss)

Phyllis Minton

### Brethren Place Brochures in Branson

Thirty-six business outlets throughout the city of Branson, Missouri, currently display *Good News* magazine and brochure displays. An additional 20 locations may be established by the time of the 2008 Feast of Tabernacles. Last year members attending the Feast in Branson were pleased to see the displays in various motels and other businesses throughout the area.

This distribution effort began on Sept. 24, 2007. Members who would like to help distribute brochures in the United States can write to John LaBissoniere at [john\\_labissoniere@ucg.org](mailto:john_labissoniere@ucg.org) or call him toll-free at (888) 369-9940.

Joel Fritts

### Cincinnati North Honors Fathers

The ladies of the Cincinnati North, Ohio, congregation went all out to honor all the dads June 14, the Sabbath before Father's Day.

The young children handed out chocolate in decorated wine glasses. Then all the men watched with great anticipation as Frank McCrady, the pastor of the North congregation, drew the winning name for the main prize. Rusty Wayne



Frank McCrady, Gerald Seelig and Bruce Kieviet get ready to enjoy giant pretzel (photo by Michelle David)

was the lucky dad. He won a gift certificate to a steak house.

After services a manly meal was served. White Castle burgers, a huge pretzel and other goodies adorned the nicely decorated table.

After the activity all the men were able to take home a nice bottle of wine. The ladies are to be commended, especially Debbie Kieviet whose ideas came together to make this so special. Thanks also go to Terri Knuckles for all her hard work.

Michelle David

### Eureka Enjoys Barbecue

On the Sabbath of Aug. 16, the Eureka, California, congregation held a barbecue at the home of members Dave and Mary Dudley after services.

The brethren enjoyed barbecue-sauced hamburgers, hot dogs and all the condiments, salad, natural sodas and much more. There were also heart-shaped chocolate cupcakes to celebrate the 32nd wedding anniversary of our pastor and his wife (Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Segall), which was two days earlier.

The weather was warm at first, then had some overcast, but our hearts were warm with good food and fellowship.

Kandy K. Goodrich



Eureka brethren socialize at barbecue (photo by Kandy K. Goodrich)

### Congratulations, Graduates!

#### Mary Elizabeth Boden

*Parents:* Thomas and Darla Boden  
*Congregation:* Minneapolis, Minnesota

*High School Accomplishments:* Mary "Liz" graduated with honors. She was active in FFA, 4-H, band and jazz band and was involved in high school musicals and plays. She was also a member of the National Honor Society and Tri-M, and she served as a freshmen mentor during her senior year.

*Church Activities/Hobbies/Interests/etc.:* She played in the church ensemble for several years, as well as attended a few UCG camps. She loves riding her horse



Mary Elizabeth Boden

and helping her uncle farm in South Dakota and has thoroughly enjoyed working on a dairy farm during the past year. She loves music, spending time with her family, traveling, laughing and eating plenty of cereal. She would also like to mention that *ridiculous* is her favorite word.

*Plans After Graduation:* She will be attending the University of Sioux Falls, though her major is still undeclared.

*Advice:* Make everything fun and always be kind.

*Favorite Scripture:* "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

#### Valarie Serpa

*Parent:* George D. Serpa  
*Congregation:* Worcester, Massachusetts

*High School Accomplishments:* Valarie was a member of the National Honor Society.

*Church Activities/Hobbies/Interests/etc.:* Valarie really enjoys science and learning about the body. She took some extra science in high school so she could understand how the body works.

*Plans After Graduation:* Valarie is attending the local community college and then plans to study occupational therapy.

*Favorite Scripture:* "There is one who makes himself rich, yet has nothing; and one who makes himself poor, yet has great riches" (Proverbs 13:7).

*Advice:* Let's make ourselves rich in the knowledge of God, and we will be rich in happiness no matter how much we have.

See "Updates," page 15

# Announcements

## Births

Nick and Amanda Bratnick of the Charlotte, North Carolina, congregation are happy to announce the birth of their son, Carter Nicholas Bratnick.



Carter Nicholas Bratnick

Carter was born May 12, 2008. He weighed 7 pounds 14 ounces and was 21 inches long. The proud grandparents are Nick and Sylvia Bratnick and Ralph and Susan Johnston. God has blessed our family with a very healthy and happy little boy.

Marty and Nicole (Peter) Henderson of the Redlands, California, congregation are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Megan Marie Henderson. Megan was born on Sept. 5, 2007. She weighed 7



Megan Marie Henderson

pounds 1 ounce and measured 19½ inches long. She is Marty and Nicole's first child. Megan is also the first grandchild for dotting grandparents Manfred and Rosmarie Peter, who attend the Redlands congregation, and Hal and Linda Henderson, who attend the Cleveland, Ohio, congregation. Andrew, Alex, Amanda and Sarah Henderson adore Megan and are excited to be uncles and aunts.

Scott and Beverly (Floyd) Smith of the Orlando, Florida, congregation are



Sidney Nicole Smith

proud to announce their second daughter, Sidney Nicole Smith. Sidney was born on June 10, 2008, and she weighed 8 pounds 8 ounces. Sidney's older sister, Brooke Elizabeth Smith, who will be 3 on Dec. 28, is very excited to have a new sister.

Rachael Gunderson, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, would like to announce the birth of her son, Harley Andrew Gunderson, born on April 20, 2008. Harley weighed 8 pounds 9 ounces and



Harley Andrew Gunderson

measured 21½ inches. He is growing strong.

Austin and Sonja Wildt of the Jackson Hole, Wyoming, congregation are happy to announce the birth of their first child, Kellen Boone Wildt. Kellen was born July 24, 2007. Kellen weighed 9 pounds 1 ounce and was 21.5 inches



Kellen Boone Wildt

long. This is the first grandchild of Robin and Nancy Kireilis (Lubbock, Texas, congregation) and Kenneth and Sherrie Wildt (Cincinnati, Ohio, congregation).

Shannon "Scott" and Heidi (Topash) Greer of the Fort Myers,



Connor Scott Greer

Florida, congregation are thrilled to announce the birth of their second child, Connor Scott. Connor was born May 16, 2008. He weighed 7 pounds 15 ounces and was 20½ inches long. Welcoming Connor is big sister Quinn; great-grandmothers Erma Keith of

Spokane, Washington, and Fannie Mae Hochstetler of Schoolcraft, Michigan; and grandparents Dean and Carole Greer of Spokane and Paul and Dorothy Topash of Wesley Chapel, Florida.

Malcolm and Cassidi Murray joyfully announce the birth of their sixth child, Gabrielle Elizabeth Murray. She was born on the 4th of July, weighing in at 8



Gabrielle Elizabeth Murray

pounds 6 ounces. She joins her siblings Michael (9), Samantha (7), Wyatt (6), Malcolm (4) and Griffin (2). Samantha is especially pleased to have a sister, having only brothers until now! Grandparents are Malcolm and Francie Murray and Chris and Andi Chapman. All attend the Flint, Michigan, congregation.

## Engagements

Wendy Jacobs, daughter of Bill and Elaine Jacobs of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Cody Sikes, son of Connie and Sherri Sikes of Purcell, Oklahoma, are thrilled to announce their engage-



Wendy Jacobs and Cody Sikes

ment. A September 2008 wedding is planned in Seattle.

## Weddings

Larry and Bonnie Greider of the Los Angeles, California, congregation are thrilled to announce the marriage of their daughter, Karie, to Dan



Dan and Karie Wohlgenuth

Wohlgenuth, son of Craig and Gloria Wohlgenuth of the Portland, Oregon, congregation. The wedding took place near sunset on the western coast of beautiful Costa Rica on May 24, 2008. Larry Greider, father of the bride, performed the ceremony. The happy couple currently resides in Vancouver, Washington.

## Obituaries

Steven Jay Bergstrom, 57, of the Chicago, Illinois, congregation, died July 5, 2008, at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria, Illinois. Steve was born on April 14, 1951,



Steven Jay Bergstrom

in Moline, Illinois, to Donald Paul and Margaret Shirley Bergstrom. He married Patricia Eagleson on Jan. 16, 1983, in Moline. Steve graduated from USC with a bachelor's of science in physician's assistant medicine. He was employed for the last four years as a physician's assistant with Mercy Health Systems.

Steve had many interests including music, tinkering with electronics and cars, studying his Bible and target practicing. His love for life left him with no limit to his interests. Steve was a member of AAPA, CAPA and NRA and enjoyed spending time with his family.

Steve is survived by his wife; two daughters, Rebecca and Tammy; mother, Shirley Bergstrom; siblings, Thomas Bergstrom (wife, Lynn), James Bergstrom (wife, Arlene) and Susan Warner; and several nieces and nephews. Steve was preceded in death by his father.

Steve was baptized in 1974 and worked for 12 years for the Television Department of the Worldwide Church of God in Pasadena, California. Steve always said this was the best job he ever had.

Memorial services were held on July 12, 2008, in Moline, Illinois. Brian Shaw, an elder in Chicago, conducted the funeral. An obituary can still be seen at [esterdahlmortuary.com](http://esterdahlmortuary.com).

Stanley Norton, longtime member and deacon in the Garden Grove, California, congregation, died July 15, 2008, just two months shy of his 90th birthday.

He was born Sept. 26, 1918, in Kan-

sas, from a farming family, and as an adult he farmed and worked in various construction jobs. He met and married his beloved wife Verna in 1940. They soon had four children, three boys and a girl, and enjoyed working as a family unit on the farm in Kansas.



Stanley Norton

In 1952 he and his wife came in contact with the Church, and were baptized in 1954. In 1960 the family moved to Huntington Beach in Southern California, and Stanley began work for the city of Huntington Beach until 1985 when he retired. He operated various types of equipment and supervised street maintenance crews, greatly enjoying working with the men and with the public.

In 1972 Stanley was ordained a deacon in the Santa Ana congregation (now Garden Grove) of the Worldwide Church of God and faithfully served the brethren in this responsibility for decades.

Stanley is survived by his wife Verna, three children, nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Beverly Savoy died at her residence in Metairie, Louisiana, on July 21, 2008, at the age of 73. Beverly is survived by her husband (Earl), two children (Sterling and Sheila), one grandchild and four great-grandchildren.



Beverly Savoy

She retired after working 23 years in the food service department at St. Martin's Episcopal School, where she was greatly loved by kids and fellow workers alike. She attended the New Orleans, Louisiana, UCG congregation along with her daughter Sheila.

She was known for being a kind, gentle and stable influence in others' lives. Beverly loved talking about God and His plan for mankind.

She had been diagnosed with cancer only recently, had undergone surgery to remove a cancerous cyst in her abdomen and was preparing to receive chemotherapy at the end of July. Sheila stated that Beverly felt and prayed that God would heal her so she wouldn't have to go through the chemo treatments. Sheila reflected on how God did answer Beverly's prayer.

The funeral was conducted by Andy Burnett, pastor of New Orleans and Laurel, Mississippi, congregations.

Huddelia (Fritzie) Stutzman, 98, of Dilworth, Minnesota, died May 30, 2008, at the Golden Living Center Nursing Home. She was born Oct. 2, 1909, between Kulm and Gackle, North Dakota. She had a sister Albie and a brother, Oscar. Her sister Anna died at age 4.

She lived her early years on a farm and later lived in Kulm and Jamestown, North Dakota. She was voted the most popular girl in Kulm in her younger years. She worked as a nan-

ny when she was 10. She also worked at a creamery, a retail store, a post office, an ice cream parlor and a drug store in her early days. She attended Dakota Business College in the 1950s and worked for American State Bank in the bookkeeping department for several years.

She married Paul Stutzman on May 9, 1938. They lived in Jamestown and Dilworth. They built two houses, one of which she lived in up to the time of her death. She worked in helping to construct the house and even troweled the basement concrete floor. She was an enthusiastic and avid gardener



Huddelia (Fritzie) Stutzman

and raised wonderful vegetables and flowers. She and Paul had a cottage at one time, and they did a lot of fishing and hunting together. She and Paul always cut up their deer themselves each year after hunting.

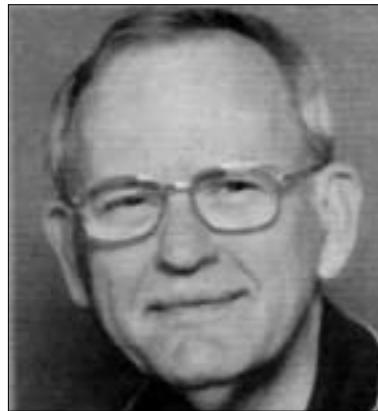
Fritzie was an accomplished dressmaker and sewed for herself and made very beautiful jackets for Paul. She also knitted scarves and mittens and other things. She was a very happy person and had a beautiful smile and loved to talk and visit. She liked to read and was knowledgeable about many things. She had an extensive library. She liked music and liked to sing.

She became a member of the Church of God in the 1960s. She attended several Church of God organizations and attended the UCG Fargo, North Dakota, congregation the past several years. She loved to read the Scriptures and put her trust in God's promises. She will be missed by all of us. She had no children and has no surviving family members.

Funeral services were held in

Moorhead, Minnesota, on June 4 with pastor Herb Teitgen officiating.

James (Jim) Rickard, 66, of Chattanooga, Tennessee, died on March 22, 2008. He had been a longtime



James Rickard

Church member and had listened to Mr. Armstrong on the radio for many years prior to being baptized in 1970. He joined with UCG in 1996. He had been an accountant with Blue Cross/

Blue Shield of Tennessee and an amateur ham radio operator for well over 40 years.

He is survived by his wife, Jean, of 45 years; a daughter, Sherry, of Chattanooga; son and daughter-in-law, Tim and Michelle, of Fort Worth, Texas; son Mark of Athens, Tennessee; two grandsons, Reno and Shane Haney, of Chattanooga; a granddaughter and grandson, Alexia and Timothy Rickard, of Fort Worth; and his mother, Ethel Rickard, of Madisonville, Kentucky. He is very much loved and missed by his family and friends.

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

"Updates," continued from page 13

## Four Volunteers Teach English and Help With Summer Camp in Ukraine

UCG members Dan and Cindy Harper who live in Cherbourg, France, and Ken Zahora from Indianapolis, Indiana, along with Stefan Saxin from Gothenburg, Sweden, went to Vinogradov, Ukraine, from June 15 to 29.

They taught English as a second language and helped at a youth summer camp in western Ukraine. They served disadvantaged and at-risk youth in the small town, working with a Sabatarian minister, Vasyl Polichko, and his wife, Irina, who provide healthy meals, Bible lessons, love and support to a large group of street children all year around.

Each summer the Polichkos go beyond this daily service to host a camp that enables the children to have even more opportunities for fun and learning. The UCG volunteers got to see firsthand the fruits of the labors of this project, partially funded by the LifeNets charity founded by Vic Kubik, a UCG pastor and Council member. They found it very inspiring to see the lives of these children so positively affected.

Most of the children are street children with different hardships behind

them. LifeNets has been supporting these children since 2001, and the Church has been working with Sabbath-keepers in this area since 1991.

Every afternoon the campers went on excursions to see various things in the



UCG volunteers help at summer camp in Vinogradov, Ukraine

area, such as peacocks and ostriches at a farm and the famous ruins in Vinogradov. As the weather grew hotter, they walked several times to a place to go swimming.

After nearly two weeks the volunteers saw progress with all the children as they performed the English songs they had learned in front of the interested adults. Following that the children performed Ukrainian songs. After the music there was food, desserts and candy—a great ending to the summer camp!

To encourage the children to keep their English glossary books, the volunteers attached a photograph of the summer English class of 2008 and gave it to each of the children. They were very pleased with this.

The volunteers said the children at the camp left a lasting impact on them. Though so many of them came from very hard backgrounds and many were still living in very difficult circumstances, they were all very loving, trusting, open and very receptive to their teaching and attention (despite the language barrier).

The volunteers were also impressed with the Polichkos, who saw a need and instead of turning away (as many of us may do, feeling helpless to do anything), took responsibility for those around them.

For additional impressions of the Ukraine trip, see Stefan Saxin's Web commentary for *Vertical Thought* ([verticalthought.org/issues/vt20/c\\_ukraine.htm](http://verticalthought.org/issues/vt20/c_ukraine.htm)) and the LifeNets Web site ([lifenets.org/vinogradov/summer08/menu.htm](http://lifenets.org/vinogradov/summer08/menu.htm)).

## 12-Year-Old Donates Hair to Locks of Love

Heidi Braun, 12-year-old daughter of Martin and Ailsa Braun, donated 15 inches of her own hair in July to Locks of Love. This is the second time she has donated her hair to the charity (see February 2007 *United News*). Locks of Love is a charitable organization that



Before and after Heidi Braun donated her hair to Locks of Love (photos by Ailsa Braun)

uses donations of hair to benefit financially disadvantaged children with long-term medical hair loss.

Heidi attends the Charlotte, North Carolina, congregation with her parents and younger sister, Heather. She contributes to vocal special music in her congregation and has performed in a number of piano recitals at local assisted-living facilities.

Ailsa Braun

## Member's Nutrition Program Featured in Newspapers

Linda Porteous, a member who attends the Olympia and Tacoma, Washington, congregations, coordinates a program called Healthy Strides

for students in preschool through grade 2 in Pacific County school districts.

Her program was featured in two local newspapers. In the *Willapa Harbor Herald* March 19 Rebekah Hastings wrote:

"Linda Porteous, affectionately known as 'Miss Linda' to local elementary school students, has been trailblazing her way through preschool through second grade classrooms for the past couple of years. As a health educator, and deliverer of the Healthy Strides program, she teaches area children about healthy eating choices, exercise and relaxation to ensure healthier kids."

*The Chinook Observer* also had an article May 7 about a field trip Mrs. Porteous arranged for 120 students to visit an organic farm.

**Local Church Updates:** If your congregation's news and events are rarely covered in *United News*, why not check with your pastor and write something for him to send in? We're looking for 100- to 300-word articles and photographs with captions. Please include a self-addressed envelope if you would like photos returned. Include the author's and photographer's names and your phone number. Please double-check the spelling of names. Please **e-mail (preferred) or give the material to your local pastor** to forward to *United News*.

## Letters

### Booklets Correspond Directly to the Bible

We just wanted to send you our greatest appreciation for offering such important literature, your booklets, for free. They are well-written, easy to understand and correspond directly with what we understand from the Bible.

We could not afford to purchase lit-

erature of this caliber on our own. Your dedication to sharing God's Word is to be commended and we hope you continue to provide this service.

Internet

### Passes on to Others

I just wanted to send a note to say thank you for your publications! I

have learned so much and they have strengthened my relationship with Christ through reading and learning so much in the materials I have received. I wish I could send in a donation but can't at this time due to financial hardship my family is currently going through. But through Christ I know He will take care of our needs. God is

working on my family and me, and I know this is just a "season" and it too will pass. I have passed on your Web site and publications to others and will definitely send in a donation to your ministry when possible. Keep up the great work you are all doing for our Father! God bless you!

Illinois

Letters to the Editor: Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Comments and suggestions are welcome. Please let us know if you would like your name printed. Mail to: *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027 or e-mail [mike\\_bennett@ucg.org](mailto:mike_bennett@ucg.org).

## News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

### Council Committee Members Announced

Following is the new list of members of the committees of the Council of Elders announced Aug. 13:

**Ethics:** Aaron Dean, Clyde Kilough, Victor Kubik (chairman), Darris McNeely, Richard Pinelli, Richard Thompson and Robin Webber.

**Roles and Rules:** Robert Berendt, Aaron Dean, Bill Eddington (chairman), Paul Kieffer, Darris McNeely and Robin Webber.

**Doctrine:** Robert Berendt, Roy Holladay, Paul Kieffer, Richard Pinelli (chairman) and Richard Thompson.

**Strategic Planning and Finance:** Robert Berendt, Aaron Dean, Bill Eddington, Roy Holladay (chairman), Paul Kieffer, Victor Kubik, Darris McNeely and Robin Webber.

**Executive:** Aaron Dean, Robert Dick (chairman), Clyde Kilough and Robin Webber. (The Executive Committee is available whenever the home office needs immediate Council signatories for documents such as state registrations, etc.).

*John Foster*

### Pre-Feast Sabbath Service to Be Held in Panama City Beach

Sabbath services will be held on Oct. 11 in the Palm Room at the Edgewater Beach Resort Conference Center in Panama City Beach, Florida, at 2 p.m. Central Time. This is the same location as the Feast of Tabernacles this year. We wanted to make this service available for those who may be arriving early for the Feast.

*Harold Rhodes*

### Youth Corps Volunteers in Jordan Begin Blog

United Youth Corps volunteers Lewis and Lena VanAusdle, Zach and Emily Smith, and Tine Banda arrived in their new home in Amman, Jordan, in mid August.

"It really does feel like home, despite only having been here for 12 days," said Lena in the first blog posting Aug. 27. "I am a volunteer at the YMWA school for special education. I have spent the last two weeks visiting all the different areas of the school to figure out which group I would like to be in. Emily works at the same school, but I'll allow her to post her impressions.

"It's been challenging, but it helps to have good friends to remind us of the big picture, and the fact that we have amazing support from UCG helps as well. Being so far from other brethren [we] can feel a little isolated, but having the support and



Youth Corps volunteers see the historical sights in Amman

encouragement from our friends and family (including our Church family) makes a huge difference.

"We have done a little exploring of our new country, but we know there is much more ahead. We have made the trek to downtown Amman, which is a treat if you like shopping, fruits and vegetables, sweets, or people watching, or history (the ruins are spectacular).

"Lewis and I have met some locals, and made some wonderful friends already. They call us their son and daughter, and they've taken us to places a little off the beaten track (Palestinian refugee camp, anyone?).

"We've just started to get into a routine, 1.5 hours on the bus to school, five hours at school, 1.5 hours on the bus

#### ■ Teen Bible Study Discussion Guides

Check out the new study guides, "Fasting" and "Self-Esteem," at [www.ucg.org/teenstudy/](http://www.ucg.org/teenstudy/)

#### ■ New RSS Feed for www.ucg.org

Keep in touch with the latest updates to the United Church of God Web site by subscribing to the new RSS feed at [www.ucg.org/United-Church-of-God-rss.htm](http://www.ucg.org/United-Church-of-God-rss.htm)

home. But Ramadan starts next week, so our schedule will change a bit. We will only be at the school for four hours—they have early release since everyone will be fasting (no food, water...from sunrise to sunset) during that time."

A link to the Jordan blog can be found on the Youth Corps Web page at [www.ucgyouthcorps.org](http://www.ucgyouthcorps.org).

### Take "Note" of Lost Sheet Music

Your help is needed. Our Feast of Tabernacles choirs are literally a few notes short of a full set of sheet music this year! We would like to put a call out for all missing, lost or misplaced choir sheet music.

You can help keep down operational costs for the Feast sites by checking around the house and sending us all sheet music that does not belong to your local choir. Perhaps you've sung in Festival choirs over the years and somehow accumulated a number of songs. Please send them to us so it can continue to serve at the Feast. You can also send in any music you would like to donate.

Some of the choir music we've enjoyed over the years is no longer available from the publishers and is simply out of print. We all know how the cost of everything, including sheet music, has gone up.

Here's how to help. Send all found sheet music to:

UCG Salem, P.O. Box 5965, Salem, OR 97304.

The music will be collected and filed with the UCG music library. If your music is labeled and you know to whom it belongs, of course you may return it directly to that congregation or director.

As participation in the Festival music program continues to expand, we will need to purchase more music. However, you can help us to keep down the costs of repurchasing music by returning or even donating music that is not being used. Music at the Feast is an important way that we praise and honor God and edify His people. Please help us to continue serving musically. Thank you for your prayers, involvement and restocking of our music libraries. Happy searching!

*Steve Myers*

### Panama City Beach Choir Members Needed

The Panama City Beach, Florida, Festival Choir is in need of volunteers who enjoy singing praises to God. All voices are welcome, but we especially need tenors and basses. If you would like to participate, or if you have any questions concerning the music, please feel free to contact the choir director, Joseph DeCapite, at [decapitejo@aol.com](mailto:decapitejo@aol.com).

*Harold Rhodes*

## What's New on the Web?

#### ■ New RSS Feed for www.gnmagazine.org

Subscribe to the new *Good News* Web site RSS feed via your feed reader or e-mail address at [www.gnmagazine.org/good-news.htm](http://www.gnmagazine.org/good-news.htm)

#### Featured Link

■ **About Our Father's Business weekly video update** Web site. <http://members.ucg.org/fathersbusiness/>

If you have questions or comments, please contact: [webmaster@ucg.org](mailto:webmaster@ucg.org)



### Feast Preteen Workbooks Prepared

We will be sending Festival Youth Workbooks to each of the U.S. Feast sites for all preteens registered at each site. The Youth Education Task Force has created these workbooks for two preteen levels, K-grade 2 and grades 3-6. The workbooks focus on note taking, developing personal relationships and understanding the meaning of the Feast.

*David Register*

### Calendar of Events

Sept. 7: ABC orientation.  
Sept. 8: ABC classes begin.  
Sept. 13: Jacksonville 40th, Jacksonville, Florida (see article, August issue, page 16).  
Sept. 27: Eugene 75th, Eugene, Oregon (see article, May issue, page 16).  
Dec. 16-18: Council of Elders meetings.  
Dec. 23-27: Winter Family Weekend, Louisville, Kentucky, from Tuesday evening through Saturday evening (see article, this page).  
Dec. 29-Jan. 4, 2009: Winter Camp, Montello, Wisconsin.  
Feb. 24-26, 2009: Council of Elders meetings.  
May 3-4, 2009: General Conference of Elders annual meeting.

### Winter Family Weekend Reservations Start Oct. 1

The 2008 Winter Family Weekend in Louisville, Kentucky, begins on the evening of Dec. 23 with a family dance. The seminars, sports and family games all begin on the morning of Dec. 24 with the event ending late Saturday night (Dec. 27).

This event has become a favorite of many Church members and their families. Another fellowship-, learning- and fun-filled few days is being planned this year. Make plans now to join us for this year's extravaganza.

ABC lectures along with additional seminars from many speakers will be offered, and the usual broad selection of family activities and organized sports are open to people of all ages. Last year we topped 2,000 people in attendance, and the event continues to grow. Many more details will be coming out following the Feast.

Reservations may be made beginning Oct. 1. The main hotel and the location of the majority of activities is the Clarion Hotel at (502) 491-4830. The rate is \$45 per night for a room and \$50 a night for a suite. The Holiday Inn Hurstbourne (at the same exit) is \$47 a night and will hold a room with a nonrefundable one-night deposit. Their number is (502) 426-2600.

Registration forms for the event as well as all other details will be made available shortly after the Feast. Keep an eye on the Church member Web site for continued updates.

*Mark Winner*



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additional mailing offices