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United News™

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

Vol. 10, No 3

www.ucg.org

March/April 2004

News At a Glance



Teens in the Philippines receive their latest copies of *Vertical Thought* (photo by David Baker). For the story on Mr. Baker and Joel Meeker's trip through Asia, see page 4

San Antonio Presents Three GN Bible Seminars

The San Antonio, Texas, congregation recently held a series of Bible seminars in which the people in a local area were invited to attend. Planned and coordinated by the congregation's Outreach Committee, the seminars, called *The Good News Bible Seminars*, were held on three consecutive Friday evenings, Jan. 9 through 23.

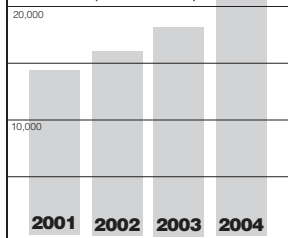
The topics were "Just What Do You Mean by the Rapture?," "What Happens to Me When I Die?" and "Are You Missing Out on a Blessing From God?" (about the Sabbath). The presenters were Gary Petty and Roger Foster.

We had decided to divide the area of San Antonio, which has a population of about 1.2 million, into four sections, targeting our outreach efforts in the east side for the January seminars. The *Good News* subscription list was separated by zip code to reflect the first section. Flyers were produced that served as an announcement and invitation, with *The Good News* magazine logo

See "News at a Glance," page 2

United Statistics

World News & Prophecy
Circulation Up 47 Percent in
3 Years (Jan. issues)



Council of Elders Works on Plans for 2004-2005

by Don Henson

The February/March set of Council of Elders meetings started Feb. 25 with mid-fiscal year reports from the home office management team and included a discussion of the Strategic Plan, Operation Plan and budget for fiscal year 2004-2005. These items were then edited and approved Feb. 27.

Report From the President

President Roy Holladay pointed out that operation managers have been asked to be especially careful with

spending since the income has been below budgeted expectations since January. He mentioned that the budget for 2004-2005 will be conservative and that health-care and insurance costs will take up most of the anticipated increase.

Mr. Holladay highlighted a few statistics that reflect media efforts in 2003 and into early 2004:

- There were 177 baptisms in 2003.
- As of the end of January, the Church has 2,309 coworkers (compared to 1,906 one year ago) and 5,283 donors (compared to 4,347 in January 2003).
- The January-February issue of *The*

Good News had a print run of 426,671, of which 240,515 are U.S. subscribers.

• The cable-access television program produced in Beloit, Wisconsin, garnered 518 responses in 2003 and the program produced in the Portland, Oregon, area (which is on about twice as many stations) brought in 2,642 responses through November 2003.

Mr. Holladay also described plans for an Education Conference to be held at the home office on March 21 to 23.

Treasurer's Report

Church Treasurer Tom Kirkpatrick,

gave a summary of the income to date and the current status of the budget. Dr. Kirkpatrick pointed out that we are two thirds of the way through the 2003-2004 fiscal year. At this point the Church's total income has risen 3.9 percent over the corresponding period of last year, whereas the budgeted increase was 4.5 percent. Significantly, the trend in income since the beginning of the calendar year has been down (-1.74 percent). It now appears likely that total income for this fiscal year will be less

See "Council," page 20

Youth Corps Projects Announced



Volunteers Gareth Simons, Logan Smith and Emily Sandilands help at summer camp in Ghana; right, volunteer Roberta Bauer teaches an English class at the Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand (photo by Joel Meeker)

by Joel Meeker

The UCG Youth Education team is excited to announce the 2004 United Youth Corps International Service Projects. This year qualified young adults will have the opportunity to participate in projects in Africa and Asia, including:

- Staffing a United Youth Camp in the Philippines

from May 16 through 31. Volunteers will act as counselors and activity instructors. Activities will be similar to most United Youth Camps and lodging will be in tents in a lush jungle setting. This camp also includes a several-day-long hike up 10,000-foot-high Mount

See "Youth Corps," page 2

ABC Student Leaders Chosen

by Gary Antion

Each year at Ambassador Bible Center opportunities for leadership are opened for students to grow as leaders. This year we have, after considering the input of the students, chosen the following students as officers and committee chairs.

Thomas Campbell has been chosen as the student body representative. He serves by leading the Student Assembly every Thursday, by keeping his fingers on the pulse of the student body



ABC student leaders: Michal Lisa Capo (secretary), Thomas Campbell (student body representative) and Jeff Lockhart (treasurer) (photo by Clarissa de Campos)

and by coordinating the various committees. He will interface regularly with the ABC administration and the home office staff. He gave his input on the two other officers of the student body.

Jeff Lockhart was selected as treasurer while Michal Lisa Capo was

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Inside:

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1.5 Million Visit Web Site; Continues Steady Growth

■ Record 181,000 visit UCG site in January; redesigned GN site to be launched around the spring Holy Days.

by Aaron Booth

A year ago the new redesigned United Church of God Web site was completed and rereleased to the public. Since then around 1.5 million visitors have accessed informative articles, weekly commentaries, audio and video sermons, "World News and Trends," booklets and more.

This past January over 181,000 visitors browsed through the UCG Web site. This is the highest number of visitors in the history of ucg.org in a one

month time frame! Also in the month of January, the online literature request form received over 12,000 requests for various publications. This is more than double the requests in past months.

We continue to receive comments from both UCG members and first-time visitors around the world on how informative and usable the Web site is for them. Some comments have been:

- "The content is obviously wonderful. In addition, the organization and functionality are very professional and make it easy for even the novice user to navigate through the information."
- "Awesome Web site! It was really nice to run into your Web site. It gave me an uplifting experience."
- "Of all the sites on my list, the UCG site is the best one I have ever

seen. Truly a blessing for anyone who wants to prove the truth for themselves concerning church doctrine for Christianity."

Over the next year we hope to continue making improvements to the UCG Web site to benefit our regular and new visitors. Currently, *The Good News* magazine Web site is being redesigned with a new visual appearance and will feature items such as *The Good News* weekly commentaries, "World News and Trends," featured articles and booklets and live news feed. We hope to have the new *Good News* Web site available around the upcoming spring Holy Days.

This past year illustrates just how important and effective a tool the Web site can be for the Church in preaching the gospel. UN

News At a Glance

Continued from page 1

placed prominently at the top. The logo was also used on the envelope's return address, which incorporated the local church's post office box.

The flyers were distributed by volunteers from the committee and the congregation to local neighborhoods and friends; copies of the magazine were stuffed with two flyers each and taken to local businesses, many of which allowed us to leave a stack. The local access TV station, on which we have a weekly Sunday half-hour segment, placed us on the community calendar. We also advertised in two small regional newspapers' community calendar sections. These promotional efforts began three weeks before the event.

The hour and a half program was simple. Welcoming remarks by a committee member were followed by special music. The presenters were then introduced with an hour set aside for the topic of the night, followed by a 15-minute Q&A session. An invitation was extended to our guests to attend Sabbath services. A closing prayer was offered to close the program, after which refreshments were served.

A total of six new guests attended, with four on the first night. One gentleman, an elderly *GN* subscriber, came to all the seminars, and three other people attended two. A couple came as a result of a flyer stuffed in a magazine, and one came as a result of the TV community calendar. Seminar attendance varied between 27 and 30.

The cost of the January seminars was minimal. A meeting room at a local community center was used for the seminars. A multimedia display table, with Church publications, laptops with the UCG home office and local congregation Web pages and a small TV with a video of our local program, was set up.

Future seminars are being planned. The next series, to occur in May, will include a test session on a Sunday afternoon. There are also plans for an afternoon program to include multiple topics in Laredo, Texas, a city on the U.S.-Mexico border, two and a half hours from San Antonio.

Sam Urbina

Elder Ordained

Scott Lord was ordained an elder Feb. 14. He and his wife, Monica, serve the Buffalo, New York, congregation.

Some 2003 U.S. Donation Receipts Delayed in the Mail

The Mail Processing staff mailed the U.S. 2003 Statements of Donations on Jan. 28 via First Class Presort. Unfortun-

See "News at a Glance," page 24

New Booklet on Jesus Nears Completion; Will Be Mailed to Members

Jesus Christ: The Real Story, the 31st booklet to be published by the United Church of God, is nearing completion and should be mailed to members this month.

"The booklet fills an important hole in our literature base and is being completed at an important time," said Scott Ashley, managing editor of booklets. "The amount of interest being generated by the movie *The Passion of the Christ* is remarkable, and we hope to capitalize on that."

The booklet is offered on the back cover ad on the March-April issue of *The Good News* and will also be offered in a letter to *GN* subscribers. Its print run will be the largest ever for the first printing of a UCGIA booklet, both because of the importance of the subject and the anticipated number of requests.

The booklet was written primarily by Bill Bradford, a longtime pastor cur-

rently serving five congregations in Queensland, Australia.

The booklet covers many important aspects of Christ's life, teachings, sacrifice and role in God's plan. Members do not need to request a copy; booklets will be mailed to all UCGIA member households.

The idea for the booklet began to gel about four years ago when Mr. Bradford wrote an article, "Was Jesus Christ Who He Said He Was?," published in the May-June 2000 *Good News*. "I'd been wanting us to do a booklet on this important subject for some time," said Mr. Ashley. "However, I didn't know who would be the best writer to handle it."

"When I saw Bill's article, it had what I thought was just the right tone for such a booklet. And in a booklet on this subject, having the right tone is everything. So I asked him if he were willing to do it, and he agreed."

The booklet, however, was slow in coming. Mr. Bradford was transferred to Australia. There a number of urgent projects kept him too busy to do much writing until late last year.

In the long run, though, the timing of the booklet worked out well, as it is being completed just as a much-publicized movie on Jesus Christ is drawing a great deal of attention.

Challenging Cover

One challenge was coming up with a suitable cover design, since UCGIA publications carry no representations of

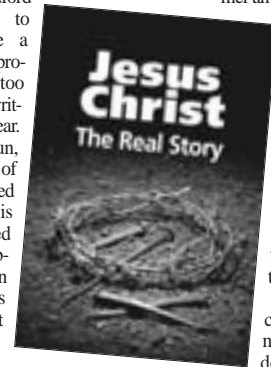
God, Jesus Christ or crosses. "Last summer an idea came to me, and I did a quick, rough sketch on a sticky note I had in my pocket," said Mr. Ashley.

His idea was to show a crown of thorns and some crucifixion nails. "But there was a problem," he said, "because we could find no such photos, and I couldn't find the items to shoot the photo myself."

Part of the solution came when he visited his mother, a member in Gadsden, Alabama. "She had some thorn bushes that had

sprung up in her yard, so I did her a

See "Booklet," page 5



"Youth Corps," continued from page 1

Apo on the Philippine island of Mindanao.

- Staffing a one-week United Youth Camp on the coast of South Africa from July 4 to 14, with the option of going on a three-day photo safari in one of South Africa's famous game parks. Volunteers will act as counselors at this camp held at a sea adventure center, which focuses on water activities in the Indian Ocean including sea kayaking, surf rafting and obstacle courses.

- Staffing a United Youth Camp in Ghana in West Africa from Aug. 10 to 17. Volunteers will act as counselors and activity instructors. Activities will be similar to most United Youth Camps.

- Teaching at the Legacy Institute School in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from June 2004 to March 2005. Volunteers on this project will teach some combination of English, music, computers, speech and farming to rural students from the Karin and Katchin tribes from the Thai-Burmese-Chinese border areas during this nine-month project. The historic city

of Chiang Mai, located in northern Thailand, allows easy access for hill tribe village visits, elephant trekking and river rafting, among other fascinating experiences.

- Staffing a United Youth Camp in Nairobi, Kenya, from Dec. 26 to 31. Activities will be similar to most United Youth Camps with the addition of instruction in health and hygiene. An optional photo safari to a wildlife reserve can also be arranged.

The United Youth Corps seeks to offer international service opportunities to qualified young adults starting at age 18. Participating in these programs requires hard work, commitment to Christian values, the desire to serve and personal expense. Previous volunteers will tell you that you'll get much more from participating in these projects than you'll be able to give!

To read and download a fact sheet and/or an application for each project, please visit the Youth Corps Web page at www.ucgyouth.org/youthcorps/. You may also contact Joel Meeker at: joel_meeker@ucg.org or at (636) 561-4026. **UN**

"ABC," continued from page 1

named secretary. These three officers are responsible to the ABC coordinator for the activities of the student body.

The committee chairs who have been appointed are: Daniel Peabody, Social Activities Committee; Terry Hayes, Ambassador Outreach Committee; Sarah Jo DeVenny, Card Creation

Committee; Cheryl Tootle and Freda Taggart, Kitchen and Food Committee; Debbie Werner, *ABC Times*; Aaron Hooper, ABC Web page; Michal Lisa Capo, Message Board; Mary Ann Miller, lead ABC music representative; and Jeff Lockhart, technical support.

We're looking forward to working with these and the other students to have a very successful year at ABC 2004! **UN**



ABC student leaders, from left: Debbie Werner, Mary Ann Miller, Aaron Hooper, Michal Lisa Capo, Daniel Peabody, Cheryl Tootle, Thomas Campbell, Freda Taggart, Jeff Lockhart and Terry Hayes (photo by Clarissa de Campos)

March/April
2004
Vol. 10, No. 3



United News
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United News (ISSN 1088-8020) is published monthly except April and October by the United Church of God, an International Association, 555 Technecenter Drive, Milford, OH 45150. © 2004 United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Periodicals Postage paid at Milford, Ohio 45150, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post publications mail agreement number 1487167.

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(chairman), Victor Kubik, Les McCullough, Joel Meeker, Mario Seiglie, Richard Thompson, Leon Walker, Anthony Wasilkoff
President: Roy Holladay

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

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



News From Around the World

Update From Youth Corps Volunteer in Thailand

by Roberta Bauer

This year as a teacher at the Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand, has gone by so fast and has been filled with a billion opportunities to learn and to serve. I've had far more opportunities to learn than to teach. Those opportunities come here at the school where my students teach me about everything from eating fish bones, to washing clothes, to teaching, to living.

They have increasingly become more like friends than students—we just learn together. Their English is improving—sometimes agonizingly slowly—but always going somewhere.

I have also been able to take several enlightening trips. In November four other teachers and I went to Cambodia to renew our Thai visas. There we stayed on the beach of the Gulf of Thailand for a few days. We went to the capital, Phnom Penh, where we saw a genocide museum and the killing fields from the Khmer Rouge days; and we went to the Angkor Wat temple complex, where we saw astounding temples built a thousand or more years ago.

Cambodia became my second favorite country because: First, the people there are nicer to strangers than friends are to each other in some places. Second, it has a rich history—both ancient and recent. And third, there's lots of really good cheap bread there. So I like it almost as much as I like the United States, but the fact that my family and friends don't live there takes away some of its appeal.

Over winter break, two other teachers and I went to a refugee camp for members of the Karen tribe from Burma. The camp has an area of 5 square miles and most of the families living there have been confined to it for all of its eight years of existence. Well, not truly confined—they can always go back to Bur-

ma. And many people sneak out into Thailand from time to time, but only for temporary visits. They always sneak back home to camp.

There are four Church families (about 15 people) living in the camp, so we went there especially to visit them. They are doing well; all of the adults have jobs (some volunteer, some for pay) and all of the children seem happy. They live in the camp "temporarily," but it's their whole life right now, so they make the most of it. Of course they are poor and rely on rations to eat most of the time (although when we were there, they spent some of the little money they had to give us special food that they don't normally eat).

There is something inspiring about the people of God wherever they are. They always give everything they have and even some things they don't have. Our camp families gave us their space to sleep in, precious candles to see by (we had a Bible study each evening by candlelight), special food they don't usual-

ly eat, their respect, their knowledge, their company.

I think one of the hardest parts about being in God's Church in the camp, or anywhere in Asia, must be that there are so few people of like mind to fellowship with. And in the camp it's a little harder because they can't go anywhere—they just have to wait for someone to visit them, which doesn't happen often.

Anyway, please keep them in your prayers—especially that God would continue to open their minds to more and more of the truth, since many of them are fairly new to it. **UN**

Three United Youth Corps volunteers (Roberta Bauer, Ryan Foster and Jessa Moser) are serving in Thailand, along with two other volunteers from UCG. Ryan has volunteered to stay another year and will be the assistant director of the Legacy school next year. Roberta will stay several months of the next school year to assist in the transition to new teachers. See page 1 for 2004-2005 projects.

Rotary Helps Fund Ambulances for Members' Clinics in Malawi

In January the Rotary Foundation in Evanston, Illinois, awarded \$44,884 to purchase two ambulances for clinics owned and operated by UCG members in Malawi.

In addition, nearly \$5,000 is being awarded for travel expenses to oversee that the project is completed and to investigate new projects in Malawi.

The money will be sent to LifeNets Southern Africa where André van Belkum, Bill Jahns and the others in the Johannesburg congregation will purchase two late model vans and convert them for ambulance use.

Members from Malawi will come down to South Africa and drive them back.

There are very few vehicles among the 85 or so brethren in Malawi. In Africa, a vehicle like this becomes multipurpose and will greatly benefit the two United Church of God congregations in Lilongwe and Blantyre.

It took over two years to follow through with all the paperwork necessary for the grant proposal, but we are certainly happy with the final outcome.

Victor Kubik

British Isles' Mail Shows Good Increases

Total responses, including mail and Internet requests, handled by the British Isles' office in 2003 was 9,177. This was a 160 percent increase over responses in 2002 and only 400 less than 2001. *The Good News* was offered to:

- 100,000 *Reader's Digest* subscribers through an insert card in the May issue of *Reader's Digest*.
- 950,000 *Reader's Digest* subscribers through a full-page advertisement in the September issue.
- 1.4 million recipients of the *Selections* brochure, in which free catalogs are offered to 25- to 40-year-old consumers.

As a result, more than 1,500 new subscribers to *The Good News* were added to the mailing list, with a further 2,000 *Selections* respondents receiving the introductory *Good News* issue and a recent copy of the magazine and the

British and European Supplement.

New Donors and Coworkers

In 2003, 68 new donors and 30 new coworkers were added. This is a significant increase over 2001 and 2002.

Good GN Renewal Response

An overall renewal response of 53 percent was received from readers of *The Good News* being renewed during 2003. The excellent response level appears to be partly due to the attention the first renewal receives as a personal letter that is sent separately from the magazine.

The report for December 2003 shows that the total circulation of *The Good News* distributed from England had increased to 3,056. This is up from 2,894 the previous month and up from 2,543 at the end of December 2002, which rep-

resents a net increase of 20 percent.

Of the total circulation figure, 2,311 are in the United Kingdom, 78 in the Isle of Man, 109 in Sweden and 45 in the Republic of Ireland. The remainder are distributed within a further 34 European countries and Israel. Curiously, if subscriptions in countries that were once a part of the old Yugoslavia were to be added together, they would be 116, the second highest circulation area for copies mailed from England.

Total requests for the first lesson of the *Bible Study Course* in 2003 was 604, compared to 282 last year and 496 the year before. Active students of the course stood at 246, with another 741 having completed all 12 lessons. Of these, 105 have returned all 12 test cards.

There are 143 donors, 98 coworkers, 154 members and 45 prospective members and associates on file. **UN**

International News At a Glance

Australia Gives Media Update

The year 2003 was a year of growth and consolidation in the media and publishing areas in Australia.

- An encouraging 41.3 percent of *GN* readers renewed their subscriptions.
- 180,000 *GN*s and booklets were mailed.
- 316 Personal Correspondence letters were answered, an increase of 10.5 percent over the previous year.

• *Bible Study Course* graduates increased by 28.6 percent to over 1,700 graduates. Over 42.6 percent of these graduates requested regular sermon tapes. After receiving tapes for a year, 34.2 percent requested further tapes and 13 percent asked for the name and telephone number of the minister.

- The number of donors increased 42.2 percent.
- The average number of visits to the Australian Web site was up 62 percent.

• The number subscribing to the *GN* through the Web was up 36.2 percent.

• *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy* was offered in the February issue of *Reader's Digest* in Australia.

• There are plans to test the first television ad in Australia during the first half of 2004.

• Approximately 10,000 *GN* subscribers now receive semiannual letter offers. So far two tapes have been offered in the letters, one on the spirit world and one on speaking in tongues.

Portuguese Bible Study Course Progressing

Longtime Brazilian member Jair de Vasconcelos has translated the main text of the 12 lessons of the *Bible Study Course* into Portuguese. His translation, written out by hand, will next be entered into a computer by João Carvalho and then reviewed by Jorge de Campos, an elder in South Africa.

Mr. Vasconcelos' work is "greatly appreciated," said Mr. de Campos. "This is a major milestone for the Portuguese work, and even though it will still take time before it will be ready for printing, we continuously appreciate your heartfelt prayers and requests to the Eternal to continue adding laborers to do His work at this end time. This is an answer to your prayers."

Canadian Staff Visits Home Office

Jan. 25 to 28 Edwin van Pelt, Kevin

Ford and Wayne Lue from the Canadian office traveled to the home office in Milford, Ohio. "Our meetings with various members of the home office staff went very well," wrote Mr. van Pelt in the Canadian update Feb. 7. "We were able to exchange ideas on a variety of items and we were able to see firsthand some of the many tasks that are done at the home office. As in the past, the trip was a rewarding experience."

A storm Jan. 25 made the trip south treacherous, and the snow and freezing rain effectively shut down the Cincinnati area, including the home office, Jan. 26. "It's somewhat ironic that three Canadians traveled south all that distance in order to experience a 'snow day,'" Mr. van Pelt wrote.

New Subscribers and Members Added in Canada

The Canadian office added over 200 new people to the files in January. A number of new donors were added as well, and Canadian membership increased. At the end of January there were a total of 422 declared members of the United Church of God in Canada.

Tape, WNP and French GN Offer in Eastern Canada Drawing Good Response

A letter was sent out in January to subscribers of *The Good News* magazine in eastern Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. The letter, sent to 1,134 people, offered an 8-minute audiotape by Graemme Marshall, pastor of the Ottawa, Ontario; Montreal, Quebec; and Sussex, New Brunswick, congregations. In addition, subscriptions were offered to *Bonnes Nouvelles* (the French *Good News*) and *World News and Prophecy*.

In early February there had been 123 responses to the letter, the majority of them requesting the tape. This more than doubled the Canadian *Bonnes Nouvelles* mailing list and added 65 subscriptions for *World News and Prophecy*.

Canada Makes Readers an Offer

The Canadian office is sending out a subscriber development letter to about 5,600 *Good News* subscribers, offering two booklets. The booklets, *Making Life Work* and *Managing Your Finances*, have not been offered in letters to Canadian subscribers in the past.

Ministers Make Month-Long Trip to Mauritius, India, Thailand, Philippines and Hong Kong

by David Baker and Joel Meeker

We have just returned from a month-long trip on a variety of Church business through several countries in the Indian Ocean and in Asia.

A Passage to India

David Baker arrived in Madras, India, on Friday afternoon, Jan. 16, so

that he could meet with Michael Hubert. David has known Mr. Hubert for approximately 18 years, dating from the time when David worked in Sri Lanka on an Ambassador Foundation project. Mr. Hubert, who was a deacon in our previous association, is not yet associated with any larger church group. He receives all of our literature as well as sermon tapes, and tries to help organize and teach

individuals about God's way of life. He is currently trying to teach very basic biblical truths to a group that is forming in Madras.

Friday evening David spoke to a small group of Sabbath-keepers at the home of Mr. Hubert. About half of the group has been baptized. David spoke on the subject of our calling and the fact that we must be called, chosen and faithful. He also left a CD containing our Bible Reading Program, since this would offer a structured approach to studying the Bible.

On the Sabbath David traveled to a village at the outskirts of Madras and visited a small group that is beginning to learn about the Sabbath. He spoke about the decision of Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and how that decision has led to the religious confusion of the world, which is so evident in India.

On Sunday afternoon, David traveled to Bangalore and met with George Jacob Paul. Mr. Paul is age 35 and is a computer programmer by profession. His father began receiving *The Plain Truth* in 1968 and raised him based on the truth he understood from *The Plain Truth*. He receives our publications and has downloaded and read most of our booklets. Mr. Paul would like to be baptized, and David has been counseling with him via e-mail. David covered a number of scriptures on repentance and faith during this meeting. Mr. Paul is progressing well toward this important event.

Monday morning, David met with another couple that he has known for many years. They are still hurt from the way they were treated in our previous association shortly before they stopped attending. David will maintain contact with them, be as helpful as he can and see that they receive some of our literature.

Monday afternoon David traveled

to Pune. There he met with Prakash Mandora, his wife Sara Priya Mandora, his 1-year-old daughter, Osin Prakash Mandora, and his wife's brother Zebulun George Stephenson Topno from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Mr. Mandora is a former Hindu from Gujarat. When he converted to Christianity his parents and friends abused him to the point that he left his province and everything that he



owned to settle in Pune. He studied Catholicism and Pentecostalism.

Two or three years ago he heard a broadcast by another Church of God group on a television station in India. He wrote and requested literature from that organization and through that contact has read much of Mr. Armstrong's material. He was baptized by one of the other organization's ministers. Due to tensions that developed in that group and due to Mr. Mandora's conviction that the organization's leader is not a prophet as he believes he is, Mandora was disfellowshipped.

He contacted United via our Web site and has read much of our literature. David has been corresponding with him since August 2003. Mr. Mandora is very excited about the truth. David discussed the history of the Church and the importance of God's Word. Tuesday afternoon David traveled on to Mumbai.

Meanwhile in Mauritius

Meanwhile Joel Meeker had arrived on the island of Mauritius, off the coast of Madagascar, on the morning of the Sabbath of Jan. 17. Joel was met by Surendra Proag who accompanied him to a hotel in Quatre Bornes. Joel and the few members in Mauritius gathered for Sabbath services. Joel spoke on worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

Following the service he showed PowerPoint slides of the home office, General Conference of Elders and Council of Elders meetings, as well as a video of his last trip through Africa. The fellowship then continued at a nearby restaurant over a deli-

cious meal of spicy Indian curry.

Over the course of the next two days, Joel had individual visits with the three baptized members United has on Mauritius. They are doing well in general, though they do sometimes suffer from their relative solitude. Two of our brethren there have not seen other Church members in years, other than during an occasional pastoral visit.

Tuesday afternoon Joel began the trip to Mumbai, India, where he arrived at 2 a.m. The drive into the city from the airport in the middle of the night was amazing. India is one of the most populous nations on earth, and although it is modern and technologically developed in many ways, millions of people live in abject poverty. On the taxi ride in, hundreds if not thousands of people of all ages could be seen rolled in mats or wraps, sleeping on the sidewalks or in the streets.

provincial capital, Aizawl. We had to register at the police station because Mizoram is a restricted area in India. Foreigners cannot enter this area without a Restricted Area Permit issued by the government. From the police station, we traveled to the home of some Sabbath-observers in Aizawl. This family that David met on an earlier visit observes the Sabbath but does not observe the annual Holy Days.

After a brief visit with them, we drove five hours to Kolasib. This mountainous region, composed of foothills to the Himalayas, has a rugged beauty. The mountains appear higher than they are because they are so steep. It seems everything in Mizoram is on a sharp slope. We finally arrived in Kolasib at 7 p.m. After an enjoyable meal and wonderful fellowship, we retired to the government tourist lodge for the evening.



Above left, David Baker speaks to the Church of God (Israel) group in Kolasib, India, translated by C.P. Lalvuana. Above, the group in Kolasib poses (photos by Joel Meeker)

Thursday Jan. 22 we flew to Calcutta, departure point for the trip to the northeast of India. We had a few hours to see the city, so we briefly visited the house where Mother Theresa first began her mission work for the poor.

We also had a look at the original temple of the goddess Kali (after whom Calcutta is named), the most frightening of the Hindu deities. According to Hinduism, Kali sometimes thirsts for blood and carnage, and her worship used to include torture and human sacrifice. We saw hundreds of people waiting in line, bearing offerings they would leave before the idol. It made us feel as the apostle Paul felt when he witnessed the pagan religions of Athens—he wanted them to know the truth!

Meeting With the Church of God (Israel)

Friday we flew to the province of Mizoram on the other side of Bangladesh. We arrived at the Lengpui airport in the early afternoon and were met by three members of the Church of God (Israel) in a small jeep. Getting the five of us and our luggage in the jeep took some creativity and perseverance.

From the airport we drove to the

We came to Kolasib to respond to a request from the Church of God (Israel) to become part of the United Church of God. The Church of God (Israel) developed independently of any organized church through the teaching of a traveling minister who taught about the Sabbath and some of the annual Holy Days.

They have closely followed developments in various churches of God and have studied the doctrinal positions of most of them. Based on their research they felt the United Church of God was closest to their doctrinal beliefs. Since they receive our literature, including *United News*, they followed with interest the process by which the former Remnant Church of God, became the United Church of God-Ghana. They were excited by United's willingness to work with such groups and hoped that something similar might be possible for them. David visited them about 18 months ago, and we came back this time to assess how we should proceed.

We found that this group does not have four-hour church services as the Remnant Church used to do. Their services are only 90 minutes; however, they have four of them each Sabbath!

We were too late for the Friday night service, but on the Sabbath we attended morning, afternoon and evening services with them. The musical accompaniment for hymns is provided by traditional Mizo drums. The drummers start about half an hour before services, and they let everyone nearby know that services are about to begin! David spoke about God's calling in the morning and Joel spoke about keys to answered prayer in the afternoon. We spoke in English, and the sermons were translated into the local Mizo language.

Following the afternoon service we visited the construction site of their new church building. Afterwards we visited the homes of some of the members. In the evening service one of their leaders, P.C. Lalvuana, spoke about the true gospel. After the service David showed some slides of his family as well as photos taken during the Feast of Tabernacles in the Philippines.

Sunday we spent the first part of the morning visiting more of the homes of the members. After a late breakfast meal we conducted a Q&A session for three hours. We answered a number of biblical questions such as the correct date for the Passover and Pentecost, circumcision, the Great Tribulation, the place of safety and the location of Christ's headquarters during the Millennium.

We also gave an overview of the United Church of God in terms of our mission and structure. Joel gave a PowerPoint presentation on the GCE, Council of Elders and home office operations. After this we met with the elders of the Church of God (Israel) to discuss their request to become a part of the United Church of God.

Joel was able to relate his experience in working with the Remnant Church of God. We pointed out that there were some doctrinal differences as well as practical differences between UCG and the Church of God (Israel). It was decided that we will spend more time getting to know each other and will continue to dialogue with each other in terms of our differences and concerns.

The elders of the Church of God (Israel) stated that their desire is to seek to become a part of UCG. After dinner there was another special service at which Joel spoke on the destiny of mankind, after which Joel showed a video presentation on the work of United in French-speaking Africa.

Monday, Jan. 26, we taped an interview with Mr. Lalvuana about the history of Sabbath-keepers and the Church of God (Israel) in Mizoram. Throughout the trip Joel was taping various segments that might be used in the Festival video this year or in other United video productions later on.

On to Thailand

We left Calcutta for Thailand at 1:45 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 27. Our goal in Thailand was to visit the United Youth

Corps volunteers serving at the Legacy Institute, and to discuss the future of the Youth Corps cooperation with the Legacy school. We arrived in Chiang Mai at 10 a.m. and spent the afternoon and evening with Leon Sexton, founder and director of the Legacy Institute. Leon treated us to a very spicy Thai meal. Thai cuisine is normally very spicy and hot, but Leon pushed it up a level for us, so our eyes were watering and noses running through much of the delicious meal. It was just like the old days when we all worked in Thailand on an Ambassador College project.

The following day we visited the Legacy Institute School and addressed the students and teachers for about an hour, fielding a few questions about our trip and work. After enjoying lunch with some of the teachers, we observed them teaching classes and tutoring students in computers, English and other subjects.

In the evening we enjoyed dinner together at a riverside restaurant in Chiang Mai. During the meal we were able to discuss some of the challenges that our United Youth Corps volunteers faced. All agreed that teaching at the Legacy School is most worthwhile, and quite a learning experience. Working such a long way from home for so long was a challenge for these fine young people. They overcame many difficulties and trials in their work of service, and certainly deserve respect and appreciation for their dedication and fine examples.

Thursday we met again with Leon



Joel Meeker (second from right) shares a meal with all the volunteer teachers at the Legacy School in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Three of the volunteer teachers are working as part of a United Youth Corps project (photo by David Baker)

and Gloria Sexton and discussed some of the challenges they face in running the Legacy Institute in Thailand. It has not always been an easy task, but has certainly been rewarding. Leon and Gloria have given generously of themselves to serve the young people at the school, and others in the region. They have had to overcome many obstacles to found and run the school, and it was inspiring for us to see their spirit of dedication.

Thursday evening we visited with the volunteers one last time and afterwards enjoyed a lovely (and less spicy!) meal with the Sextons. Early Friday morning, we departed Chiang Mai and transited through Bangkok on our way to Manila.

Island Hopping in the Philippines

Friday, Jan. 30, we arrived in Manila at 3 p.m. We were met at the airport by Bing Soriano and taken to our hotel. In the evening we enjoyed getting together with Rey and Cynthia Evasco for dinner at a bayside restaurant. Rey is the pastor of the Manila congregation.

Very early Sabbath morning, we departed Manila for Tacloban on the island of Leyte. We arrived in Tacloban at 7:20 a.m. and were greeted by Florante and Lina Siopan and some of the Leyte brethren. We each gave a split sermon in the morning service, the first on the topic of the return of Christ using the example of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's return to Leyte. The second was entitled "Do the Right Thing Anyway" using illustrations from the Paradoxical Commandments.

We had a record-setting 80 people in attendance, including several who were attending a UCG service for the first time, and everyone shared a pleasant lunch after the service.

In the afternoon we gave slide show presentations. Joel discussed the organization and governance of UCG and showed slides of the GCE, Council of Elders and home office staff. David gave a brief update on our trip through India and Thailand and then showed photos taken during the Feast in Iloilo last year. Many of those attending enjoyed seeing photos from their Feast site.

Sunday we taped an interview with Mr. Siopan about his work in the Visayan Islands and the challenges he faces in caring for widely scattered

had visited them from outside the Philippines, which added to their excitement, and sense of belonging to a truly international work.

Early Monday morning we departed Tacloban for Davao City on the island of Mindanao, via Manila. We arrived in Davao City at 3 p.m. and were met at the airport by Ed Macaraeg, the pastor on the island. During lunch he updated us on the work in Mindanao. After lunch we traveled to the Macaraegs' house and toured the office in their home. We enjoyed a rooftop dinner and fellowship



Brethren on Leyte, Philippines. Chorale sings at services in Tacloban, Leyte (photos by Joel Meeker)

with the Macaraegs in the evening.

The next morning we visited the homes of several members in Davao. One member helps subsidize her family income by making and selling peanut butter, and another member helps to support her family by making beautiful cards from handcrafted paper. She is also trying to teach other members this craft and they are hoping to market their cards in the United States. After our visits we returned to the office and taped an interview with Ed and Lorna Macaraeg. Then it was back to Manila.

We arrived in Manila at 2:30 p.m. and were met at the airport by Cynthia Evasco. She took us to see the Manila American Cemetery, which contains the graves of 17,206 American soldiers who lost their lives in the epic defense and recapture of the Philippines and the East Indies, as well as other U.S. military operations in the Pacific. After a brief visit to the Evasco home, we enjoyed a wonderful meal with Rey and Cynthia Evasco and Eriz and Teresa Dizon.

The next day the Evascos and Dizons took time off from their work so that we could spend the day fellowshipping and discussing the work in the Philippines. Early in the morning we started what turned out to be a rather adventurous journey to the island of Corregidor. Cor-

regidor was the island fortress to which the American and Filipino forces retreated during the Japanese invasion in 1941. In early 1942 Gen. Douglas MacArthur was ordered to leave Corregidor and break through the enemy lines to Aus-



tralia. It was during his arrival in Australia that MacArthur uttered the famous words "I shall return." Corregidor eventually fell to the Japanese in May of 1942 and was recaptured by Allied soldiers under MacArthur in March 1945.

Our guide turned out to be a former Plain Truth subscriber, and he remembered the visit of former Church leaders to the Philippines. He requested a subscription to *The Good News* magazine. After visiting many of the sites on Corregidor, we returned to Manila, where we taped interviews with Rey Evasco and Eriz Dizon about the work on the island of Luzon and the challenges that they anticipate facing in doing God's work in this fascinating part of the world.

Last Stop: Hong Kong

Thursday afternoon, Feb. 5, we departed for Hong Kong, arriving just after dark. We left Manila enjoying sunny skies and 80-degree Fahrenheit (27 Celsius) weather and arrived in Hong Kong experiencing rain and 40-degree Fahrenheit (4 Celsius) temperatures. We were unpleasantly surprised to discover that our hotel did not have heat! Both of us managed to come down with a cold during our visit to Hong Kong.

Friday morning we took a brief tour of Hong Kong Island. Hong Kong is quite an amazing place: a small island full of skyscrapers, surrounded by sea

traffic of all sorts. The plunging view from Victoria Peak gives a breathtaking overview of this modern metropolis, where Western and Chinese cultures have overlapped for a hundred years.

That evening, we met Ma Ming Tak for dinner. Ma Ming Tak is a longtime member, in 1971 becoming the first member ever to be baptized in Hong Kong. We were not able to have dinner with the entire Ma family due to the illness of their daughter Sophia, who is being treated for leukemia. Sophia had her last session of chemotherapy before our arrival and unfortunately developed a fever. Due to the fever she had to spend the weekend in the hospital.

On the Sabbath we went to the Ma family apartment and enjoyed a wonderful Sabbath service with the Mas and two Filipino members who live and work in Hong Kong. Saturday evening we enjoyed a delightful Chinese dinner with some of the members.

Sunday evening we had dinner with Ming Tak and his son Richard at the famous Jumbo floating restaurant. We discussed some of the issues he felt the Church in Hong Kong and in Asia would face in the future. It will be a challenge to reach people in the Chinese culture, but God is able to call whom He will from wherever He wills as the example of our brethren in Hong Kong makes clear.

Monday, Feb. 9, after nearly a month on the road, we returned home, overjoyed to see our families once again. Reflecting on this trip we were struck once again by the greatness of our Father's work. The gospel is going out in places all around the planet. And He is calling and working in the lives of people from vastly different backgrounds and in vastly different cultures as He prepares a people. We feel very privileged



David Baker speaks to the small group in Hong Kong. Above, Hong Kong harbor (photos by Joel Meeker)



to be part of a church that God is using to serve members of the Body of Christ all over the world. UN

"Booklet," continued from page 2

favor by getting rid of them. However, I had ulterior motives! I twisted them into two crowns of thorns, packed them carefully in a box, and brought them home with me."

There they sat for months while he searched for some suitable crucifixion nails. "I looked everywhere I could think of and couldn't find anything remotely similar. I finally gave up and decided to either sculpt or carve some."

But then, in late January, an unusual event happened. "I was attending a conference on biblical archaeology in Albuquerque, New Mexico," he explained. "One of the sessions happened to be on metalworking in Bible times, presented by a master blacksmith. And right there in front of me, as part of his presentation, he made several crucifixion nails and an imitation Roman spearhead."

The blacksmith had already committed to donating the items to the

museum sponsoring the conference, so Mr. Ashley contacted the museum director and arranged to have the items mailed to him for a photo shoot. "So I rigged up a mini-studio on the trundle bed in my basement office, lit it with a desk lamp duct-taped to a stool so it wouldn't fall over, and shot several variations," he said.

"The final result was exactly what I'd envisioned many months earlier—and hopefully people will find it an effective and suitable cover." UN

Senior Pastor Sees Changes, Growth in East Africa

by John Elliott

East Africa has seen many changes on many levels in just the last year, and it has been exciting to witness and be part of it. I have just returned from my fifth trip to East Africa in the last year, this time accompanied by Phoenix, Arizona, member Dan McGee.

Ending the Downward Spiral

When I first visited the region a year ago, evidence abounded of a 23-year-old political regime that had mired Kenya in a downward spiral of corruption, decay and neglect. Its president, Daniel Moi, had begun as a noble leader following the benign rule of



John Elliott baptizes Zablou Manyange of Ogembo, Kenya

independence leader Jomo Kenyatta. But a careless governmental system eventually conspired to bleed its impoverished citizens of everything that could be fleeced from them for the personal gain of those in power.

Armed police roadblocks were little more than enforced cash receptacles for those bearing the AK-47s. "Justice" was served to whoever contributed the most cash. One of our deacons along with the homeowners' association board he serves on were sentenced to jail for resisting a land-grabber who won rights to his stolen property by paying off the judge. The previous government despised humanitarian and assistance funds that bypassed their system, so they refused to register any new churches or nonprofit entities.

Industries providing jobs to desperate workers were milked of revenues and closed down. Equities ranging from contributed aid to urban development to public works projects ended up in the hands of the politicians and their friends. When the rains failed, the people starved. But a corrupt government always found ways to fleece some of the most impoverished people on the planet. Composting garbage was a common sight in street markets and along roadsides.

This "take" mentality has been reflected in a new generation of youth emulating "successful" tactics of governmental leaders. Hoodlums driving 40,000 unsafe minivan taxis called "matatus" (meaning "room for one more") hauled leery passengers at unsafe speeds, cramming as many as 22 persons into what was designed as a

seven-seat vehicle. The accidents were common and grizzly.

My first personal experience with extortion happened during the first trip when my cab paused beside the ruins of the former American embassy in Nairobi. Suddenly the hand of a young adult entered the car, stopping in front of my face and pinning my head against my seat. The bearer was kneading his own nasty excrement an inch from my face threatening to mash it into my eyes, nose and mouth if I didn't hand over 100 Kenya shillings. My reaction was to begin rolling up the window to trap the "street boys'" arm in order to reduce the threat. Meanwhile my driver verbally threatened the man with violence if he touched me.

The assailant retreated, which the driver attributed to my "lack of showing any fear." But I attributed the outcome to the many prayers offered on behalf of those of us who travel for God's work. That firsthand experience of seeing how low someone would sink in order to extort a mere dollar remains fresh in my mind a year later. (And the folly of attempting to save a dollar over a principle hasn't been lost on me either!)

Changes for the Better

When Jesus Christ returns to earth He will establish a government based on concern for the physical and spiritual well-being of its citizens. The changes will be dramatic and refreshing.

Similarly, in the year that has passed since a new government began in Kenya, reforms have brought changes that have been exciting to witness. A genuine man-made attempt at helping and serving the population is taking place today in Kenya, with limited but positive results. The challenge gives an advance appreciation of the awesome task and results of working with Christ to bring mankind a wonderful world tomorrow. Although a human-based attempt, it is exciting to see a people try to rise out of the ashes of corruption, greed and lawlessness.

The reformed National Coalition Rainbow party (NARC) under recently elected President Kibaki has made impressive strides in its first year in routing corrupt leadership and reforming the entire governmental system from its head to its toe. That has been a monumental task for which I held low expectations initially. It is one thing to promise it and another to change a system of greed to one focused on serving and helping. Yet, the daily successes and the momentum for reform on all levels have been truly inspiring and amazing! Even the focus of the new leader has not been on himself, and he will not even put his name on the paper currency.

Absent are the "street boys" who were rounded up and sent to "boot camp" and now serve in the military earning legitimate wages. Gone are the armed mandatory "cash machines" of the road police. The government encouraged citizens to arrest any police who tried to extort funds, and they did!

This trip the armed police roadblocks were back, only now working to insure that local citizens were transported respectfully and safely. All matatus were grounded until retrofitted with proper seating, mandatory seat belts for each passenger, and a governor regulating top speeds to 80 kilometers per hour.

Vanished also is the system of bribing officials to do their jobs properly. An experience on my latest trip demonstrated how serious officials are about honesty these days. My rental car inadvertently carried registration information for another vehicle. When trying to leave Kenya and cross at a remote border post into Uganda, the customs official would not accept my application. "Give him a 3,000 shilling bribe, that is the way they work," the rental agent told me over the phone.

Sensing the gist of the conversation, I was given a warning that I would be arrested if I even tried to offer the official some "encouragement" to process my paperwork. Instead, he stated, "By law I should impound your vehicle because it appears that it is stolen and you are attempting to leave the country with it. What do you expect me to do, let you steal it?"

I began to try to work with him in finding a solution for which there was none. Nothing but the prayers of the brethren could explain the final raising of the gate that allowed us to travel to Kampala and visit with and baptize our first United Church of God member in Uganda, Charles Kisembo.

The Plight of a Widow; Registering the Church

An example of the new mentality was seen in the plight of a widow of a government employee who lives in a



East Africa leadership: David Owak, David Gichuru, John Elliott, Antonio Ndung'u, Moses Nyaira and John Owak

remote village and has never received her widow's pension. David Gichuru and I met with a senior government administrator to see what could be done in the matter. He shook our hands and exclaimed over and over that it is the government's duty to help such widows and give people what is due them "as God expects from us and from you." He showed us that his office had already processed her paperwork and resolving the matter will happen as soon as the lady resolves an important outstanding issue with her district officer.

What a joy it was to see a caring and concerned official working in a just and godly manner! A similar mindset has been demonstrated during our application for registering the Church in Kenya. The Kenya National Intelli-

gence Bureau investigated the Church and has recommended to the government that they approve our registration application. This in spite of the fact that there has been no official change to the previous policy of not registering churches. Your prayers on this urgent matter are most welcome as we pursue a legal status there.

In a way, Kenya seems like a mini-prototype of the millennial reformation that will come to all nations when Christ and the saints rule the world. Although imperfect today, one cannot help but salute the efforts and accomplishments being attempted.

However hopeful and optimistic one is about change, a sinister element seeps through the northern frontier of porous borders with Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda. This allows revolutionaries and lawless renegades to destabilize the new mindset and attempt to undermine the positive changes.

The Daily Lives of the Brethren

While political, economic and infrastructural improvements are being made in Kenya, the daily lives of our brethren throughout the region are not personally impacted much by these changes. A lack of clean water to drink and cook with prevails along with the associated typhoid fever. While visiting the Got Kachola congregation, 14 people, mostly children, sought anointing for typhoid fever and malaria, a disease born by mosquitoes throughout the entire region.

The economy of small towns and villages remains weak and collapses with each period of famine.

While it is not within the scope of the Church's finances to remedy these situations, some help is on the horizon. The Church's new Good Works Program solicits donations from fund-raisers aimed at helping with group needs. For East Africa a pending proposal includes fresh-water well projects, church hall/shelter construction and a vehicle to enable Church leaders to more regularly visit and nurture congregations located in remote areas unreachable by public transportation.



Dan McGee teaches Nyanjagi, Tanzania, congregation in half-built meeting hall

Additionally, we are working with Victor Kubik in forming an East Africa chapter of LifeNets to enable us to receive humanitarian aid and medical supplies for distribution to members

and their neighbors. Not all of the needs in this life will be met and solved. But the Church seeks to do all it can with the limited resources available in nurturing the spiritual lives of those God is calling in this wonderful part of the world.

Preaching the Gospel

The mission of the United Church of God is to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to a world held captive by a god of a different mindset. Then to prepare the people whom the Father draws to Himself for growth and nourishment in His Kingdom.

This refreshing and uplifting news is being shared by our brethren with family and acquaintances throughout the region. One man walked 30 kilometers to attend a Bible study with us, but



John Elliott speaks to the Nairobi, Kenya, congregation

arrived shortly afterward. Another came 200 kilometers by bus to rediscover the Church he had lost contact with 10 years ago. The truth is being embraced by a growing number of new people who are attending our services and receiving our literature.

At Madiani we held an outdoor Bible study whose attendance swelled to 70 from neighbors of Anglican and Baptist affiliation who had heard we were coming. The lively Q&A that followed corrected many commonly believed doctrines that are not found in Scripture. At the conclusion, one man rose and stated, "You have spoken the truth right from the Bible, not from traditions of a church. You are honest and you are truthful."

To help get the truth published in their own languages, Antonio Ndung'u and John Owak are now working full-time in, among other things, editing translated literature into two African languages: Kiswahili and Luo. Dan McGee witnessed the need firsthand and is making plans to print the translated booklets on his company's presses in Arizona. The first printing of some of our translated core literature is anticipated sometime this spring.

The work of God in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda over the past year has been a rewarding, challenging and exhilarating experience. All of us in East Africa hope that perhaps you will be able to visit us for the Feast sometime. In the meantime, thank you for your support and please continue to remember us to our Father as we continue to remember you. **UN**

John Elliott is pastor of the Phoenix East and Yuma, Arizona, congregations and senior pastor for East Africa.

Members' Perspectives: Why Is the GCE Important?

by Michael and Debbie Scheid

When we were asked to write an article sharing members' perspectives on the Annual Meeting of the General Conference of Elders, we realized we hadn't really given it much thought in past years.

Of course, we prayed for its success each year and read the updates as they were available, but this was the extent of our involvement. Now we had to ask ourselves, why is the conference important and what results do we expect from the GCE each year? We also felt it prudent to ask other members the same questions and include their ideas in the remainder of this article.

So, from a member's perspective, why is the General Conference of Elders meeting important? Or, put another way, what occurs at the conference that is beneficial to the Church, beneficial to the congregations, beneficial to the elders and beneficial to the members?

First of all, we as members and elders, alike, can use the GCE as a reminder not

to fall into the trap of provincialism, or thinking only within the bounds of our local congregation. Having elders on location, representing God's people from all parts of the world, emphasizes that the Church exists beyond our congregation, our region and our country.

For instance, how many of us realize that the second largest congregation in the United Church of God is in Santiago, Chile? Those attending the GCE typically hear five or six updates from international areas each year, not to mention the many personal interactions outside of any formal group meeting. The members then hear about the updates through *United News* or directly from the elders who attended. The General Conference is a yearly reminder of how all of us are part of a larger, world-encompassing organization.

Secondly, workshops and formal instruction allow our elders to add to and improve their various skills. The training helps them apply these skills within the context of serving the congregation as well as the community.

A gathering of all the elders for an

extended period of time allows numerous opportunities for sharing, both formal and informal. Longtime elders are able to pass along their years of experience and wisdom to newer elders. New elders may bring a fresh or different perspective to longstanding issues or challenges.

All of this interaction can bring direct benefits to the brethren in our congrega-

Just as the elders have the responsibility to attend the GCE when able, actively participate and apply what they learn, we as members also have responsibilities. We have the responsibility to pray for successful planning before the conference . . .

tions and therefore to the Church as a whole. Methods learned and applied successfully in one rural congregation may work well in another rural or even in an urban setting. This consideration applies equally to small and large congregations and between congregations of different countries.

Thirdly, what results should we expect from our elders attending the GCE? This is most important, because

without results, it is just a costly, albeit pleasant, mental and physical exercise.

From our perspective, we expect our elders to return with new and better ideas for improving our congregations. There should be answers to any questions posed before the conference. Possible solutions that haven't been considered before in one congregation, but worked well in another, can now be applied to

problems or concerns. Our elders will have had the opportunity to improve themselves as well as learn new skills through the workshops. We should be able to see their growth as they continue to serve and lead us.

Just as the elders have the responsibility to attend the GCE when able, actively participate and apply what they learn, we as members also have responsibilities. We have the responsibility to

pray for successful planning before the conference. We have the responsibility to pray during the meetings for productivity, unity and for God's express will to be made known.

We also have the responsibility before the conference to communicate our input on balloting items, ideas, questions and concerns to the elders attending. After the conference, we have a responsibility to pray for the successful implementation of what they have learned. We also have a responsibility to thank our elders for their ongoing care, concern and service on our behalf.

Through the process of writing this article, we have realized that it is easy to take the GCE for granted, something we should not do. We also should not take our elders for granted. We need to be actively involved with the growth of our congregations. We cannot expect our elders to be committed if we are not. If they don't think we care, why should they invest their time, effort and money to attend the GCE? Let's let our elders know we want our congregations to be growing, maturing and thriving. **UN**

Why as a GCE Member I Strive to Attend Our Annual Conference

by Jonathan Garnant

As an elder in the Los Angeles, California, congregation, I have been given the opportunity to share my reasons and motivation for attending the GCE meetings each year. The conference represents a number of priorities to me personally and to the members I represent. Here are some of the reasons I attend.

An International Perspective

Because we are engaged in a worldwide effort of promoting the gospel, the priority to connect with others from around the world is critical. In Los Angeles, we worship together with brethren from Ghana, England, Mexico, Canada and (by my last count) 12 other countries. And, while we enjoy all the benefits of that blending of cultures (we have amazing potlucks!), I still feel the great need to hear from elders who *actually live and serve in those areas, day by day*. They bring a perspective and urgency that fascinates and inspires me. I am reminded for

whom to pray and about what.

England, the Philippines, Mexico, Ghana and Germany are not places; they are the homes of brethren. As the elders speak of their areas, they are filled with the passion of the Church's efforts in their area. It becomes dramatically obvious that they love what they are doing and the people they serve. Hearing from the international areas is a prime objective and one of the highlights of the conference, and as I listen, I wish it could go on forever.

Family

Many of us have served in many areas and now have our "home" congregation, yet we long to hear about the places, remember the brethren and become reacquainted with other elders with whom we have served. They are more than old coworkers or even friends—they are family. E-mail and even letters are a poor second to a hug, a chat and a cup of coffee together. It's great to see 300 men (and spouses) hug and cry. If we weren't called to order, we would continue fellowshiping for three days.

Grand Picture

I attend because it gives me a larger picture. I want to hear from, be motivated by and speak to Roy Holladay and Clyde Kilough. I want to hear Peter Eddington speak about his programs, John LaBissoniere about the *Good News* distribution, Tom Kirkpatrick about the finances . . .

These men see the landscape and I see only my backyard. And as much as I love my area, I want to join with David Register, our pastor, and the other elders in communicating a common message back to the brethren. We very much sense our responsibilities as representatives, on behalf of our constituency, being sent and returning to inform and encourage. It reminds me that we are not individual churches; we are one Church with one goal.

Business

The annual GCE meetings center around a mandated business meeting for the elders. And, yes, this entails paperwork. I must be honest that although this is my least favorite aspect, it is a necessity. We must insure that the

beliefs, the operations and the day-to-day functions of the Church are maintained and given proper collective oversight as is our constitutional responsibility.

Representing the Congregation

I am pleased that I have the privilege of representing, along with our pastor and other elders, the Los Angeles congregation. As an elder and as a team, we are there to serve and represent our brethren as all the elders do for their particular congregations. We are one of many, yet my name tag says Los Angeles, so I wear it knowing that with the wearing comes a responsibility and accountability to those back home.

Learning

Another aspect of the conference is brainstorming and attendance at the various workshops. Youth programs, assistance for elderly brethren, a meeting on theological issues . . . The workshops can be a frustrating time in that there are always two or three superb sessions being conducted, simultaneously. Our

planners do a remarkable job in scheduling, but there is just too much good information. I want to hear it all.

For an elder who works another job, attending is very special. We must plan our finances carefully. There is a substantial amount of preparation even before we go to the conference as we review amendments, operational budgets (many nonsalaried elders have financial backgrounds and/or have managed corporations out in the business world). Our individual and collective expertise is expected, welcomed and vital to the well-being of our Church.

What do I come away with? A sense of belonging, camaraderie and accomplishment. Because God has seen fit to bless us in terms of our brethren, the peace we currently enjoy, wonderful publications and positive finances, I am grateful.

I hope to come away with the same experience as in past years. I pray I come away with sincere gratefulness that we are doing the right things, for the right reason. It is an honor to attend the conference. **UN**

The Benefits of the GCE Meetings for Elders' Wives

by Barbara Martin

Let me begin by saying, I realize many wives are unable to attend the annual UCG Conference of Elders with their husbands for various reasons. But I would like to encourage as many as possible to make an effort at some time to attend these jam-packed meetings.

As the wife of a member of the General Conference of Elders,

please allow me to share with you some of my personal thoughts regarding the merits of attending this year's conference. I appreciate this "special time" together with my husband. We wives share a vital part in our husband's ministry and service to the membership of the United Church of God. It also provides a wonderful opportunity to interface with others in the ministry we might not see at any other time. This fel-

lowship is much needed for us all.

I look forward to being with everyone, sharing ideas and ways to improve my service to God, my husband and the congregations in which we serve as a ministerial couple. This is made possible via special presentations prepared for elders and wives. The breakout sessions allow for interactive exchange of ideas, which we as wives need as much as our husbands.

Nothing Takes the Place of Being There

Regarding the conference, nothing takes the place of being there and experiencing it firsthand. I enjoy hearing what God has done and is doing in His work as the years go by. Most of all, the conference provides a much-needed break from the routine of everyday ministry in our local areas of responsibility. It provides for us ladies the "big pic-

ture" of how our loving God is using everyone to do His will on a much broader scale of understanding.

I hope to see many of you at this year's conference. For those unable to attend this year, you will be missed. Hopefully you can plan for another time.

Wishing you all the best,
Your sister in Christ,
Barbara Martin
Macon/Columbus, Georgia

Your Part in Making the Feast Successful

■ Here's a simple way we can help make the Feast better for everyone.

by Larry J. Walker

The Feast of Tabernacles is one of the most orderly and peaceful conventions of its size and scope.

The main reason is the converted minds and hearts of the membership. The positive feedback we have long received from the communities where the Feast has been observed is a testimony of this fact and a well-deserved tribute to our members.

Another important factor in the successful observance of the Feast is expressed in principle in 1 Corinthians 14:40, "Let all things be done decently and in order." In a word, this passage speaks to the concept of organization. Over the period of many decades of Feast observance, the Church has learned and implemented policies and procedures to help the Feast run smoothly so that



everyone can rejoice as God intends for us to do at the Feast.

The combination of time-tested policies and procedures combined with the commitment and cooperative spirit of Feastgoers results in the outstanding track record of success that we have experienced over the many years of keeping the Feast.

Registration

Why is it so important to register for the site you plan to attend? A great deal of advance planning is

necessary long before the Feast begins. Hall selection, housing, chair setup, sound equipment needs, selection and planning of recreational and social activities, number of hymnals to order and how many announcement bulletins to print, to name a few, all require knowing how many people plan to attend a particular Feast site.

Why is it so important to register for the site you plan to attend? A great deal of advance planning is necessary long before the Feast begins. Hall selection, housing, chair setup, sound equipment needs, selection and planning of recreational and social activities, number of hymnals to order and how many announcement bulletins to print, to name a few, all require knowing how many people plan to attend a particular Feast site.

Attendance has far exceeded registration figures at many of our Feast sites the past few years. While on the surface this seems exciting, it also poses organizational challenges in many of the planning areas men-

tioned above. Part of the reason for the attendance increase is people attending that are not United Church of God members, perhaps even people from the local community who have no Church of God background. Of course we do not expect them to register. But when attendance overages include United Church of God members who did not register, we

feel it is important to remind everyone of the importance of registration. There are always some people who have to change plans for a wide variety of reasons beyond their control. So we don't expect that registration figures will be totally accurate. However, when the figures are off by hundreds of people, it can become a problem that can adversely affect all in attendance.

You can help us greatly by being sure to fill out the 2004 Festival Registration form below and turn it in to the Festival advisor in your local congregation April 3, 10 or 17.

A Note of Appreciation

I'm sure that I speak for all Festival coordinators and home office personnel by expressing my sincere, heartfelt appreciation to all of you for your part in making the Feast the joyous and edifying occasion that it has always been. The apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:16 speaks of the part each member plays in this edification process, that "the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

Thank you for doing your part! **UW**

2004 Festival Fund

To meet Festival expenses throughout the world, U.S. members are asked to send in a 10 percent donation from their expected second tithe total (a tithe of the tithe). **Canadian** members may make a similar donation to the Canadian office.

- Please indicate the amount you are sending in the spaces below.
- Include your personal identification number (PIN) from your latest *United News* or *Good News* label.
- Make your check payable to *United Church of God* and label it "Festival Fund."
- Clip out and enclose the completed form, along with your check, in one of the labeled reply envelopes mailed to you recently from the home office.
- Affix postage and mail.

Your PIN:

U _____

Donation Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State/Province _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

2004 Festival Registration

United States and Canadian head-of-household members should clip out or copy this form and take it to services on April 3, 10 or 17, 2004. It should be filled out and given to the Festival advisor in the local congregation.

Members wishing to transfer to a U.S. or Canadian site *from another country* will automatically be accepted; however, please have your pastor contact the home office via e-mail at USFestival@ucg.org. The information should include the requester's name, the Feast site requested, the number of adults age 20 and over, number of teens and the number of those age 12 and under.

Any member wishing to transfer to a site *outside the United States or Canada* should contact the Festival coordinator of that site directly. Some additional information may be in the *Festival Planning Brochure* to be mailed at the end of April.

Name _____ Home Telephone () _____ Work Telephone () _____

Address _____ City _____ State/Province _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

How many in your household will attend? Number of Adults (over age 20) _____ Number of Teens (ages 13 to 19) _____ Number of Children (ages 12 and under) _____ For those attending FYI classes, please indicate: Kindergarten (ages 5-6) _____ 1st grade (ages 6-7) _____ 2nd & 3rd (ages 7-9) _____ 4th & 5th (ages 9-11) _____

Where are you planning to attend? Assigned Site _____ Transfer _____ Choice of Site _____ (Automatic transfer approval is expected for all U.S. and Canadian sites except Anchorage. See special instructions for applying to Anchorage. Pastors will receive transfer notification by May 22.)

Number of Single Adults _____ Number of Seniors (age 60 and over; include spouse even if under 60) _____

Special Needs: Handicapped Parking Wheelchair _____ Deaf _____ Hard of Hearing _____ Need Translation (specify) _____

Do Not Mail to Home Office—Contact Local Festival Advisor or Pastor for Registration

2004 Feast Sites

Argentina

Australia

Frederick Henry Bay, Tasmania
New South Wales
Noosa, Queensland

Barbados

Brazil

British Isles

Cameroon

Canada

Collingwood, Ontario
Kelowna, British Columbia
Mont-Sainte-Anne, Quebec
Regina, Saskatchewan
St. John's, Newfoundland

Chile

Estonia

France

Germany

Ghana

Guatemala

Italy

Jamaica

Kenya

Malawi

Malaysia

Mexico

New Zealand

Peru

Philippines

Baguio City
Davao City
Iloilo City

Rwanda

South Africa

George
Uvongo

Togo

Tonga

United States

Anchorage, Alaska
Bend-Redmond, Oregon
Branson, Missouri
Escondido (San Diego), California
Hagerstown, Maryland
Jekyll Island, Georgia
Kerrville, Texas
Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii
Lexington, Kentucky
Panama City Beach, Florida
Steamboat Springs, Colorado
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

Additional sites are planned, but most will not encourage transfers.



The Feast of Tabernacles

In this special supplement are descriptions of Feast sites in alphabetical order by country. More sites may be added, but sufficient information was not available to print in this issue.

The *Festival Planning Brochure* will be mailed at the end of April. It will contain additional site information; a list of housing establishments for U.S., Canadian and some other sites; helpful tips for planning your Feast; and articles on the meaning of the Feast.

On the following pages, the + sign at the beginning of international phone numbers signifies the country code. Dollar amounts are in U.S. currency unless noted otherwise. The Web site www.oanda.com provides up-to-date currency conversion information.

Argentina

Mendoza

We are again planning to have the Feast of Tabernacles for Argentina, Bolivia and Chile in the beautiful city of Mendoza, Argentina.

Mendoza is in the foothills of the Andes, in the western part of Argentina. It is actually closer to Santiago, Chile, than to Buenos Aires, Argentina. It is about 240 miles from Santiago and can be reached by plane either from Buenos Aires or from Santiago.

For those who prefer to go by bus, the trip from Santiago to Mendoza is about six hours, including the time needed for border crossing between Chile and Argentina. (Americans do not need a visa for either Chile or Argentina, though they must have valid passports.)

However, this time we are advising our brethren from other parts of the world to fly directly to Mendoza. This way they save the extra money they charge for entering the airport in Santiago and also the hassle of crossing by bus the Cordillera de los Andes, which, while beautiful, could be tiring especially for those already traveling from outside the country.

We will be renting several buses in Chile to take the members to Mendoza, but that will be a service for the local brethren. The members in Chile and Argentina will be housed in the Hotel Ejercito de los Andes, which will also be the location for services.

Unfortunately, this hotel is not large enough to accommodate our visitors. However, we have located a four-star

hotel nearby, the Hotel Ibis. The cost is \$30 per day for single occupancy, or \$15 per day per person for double occupancy. These prices include breakfast. The rest of the meals you can choose to have with the rest of the local brethren in the Hotel Ejercito de los Andes at very reasonable prices. Lunch or dinner will be just the equivalent of \$3. There are also other hotels of the same or higher category in the vicinity. However, we recommend the Hotel Ibis because of its nice quality and its closeness to the main hotel where we will have services.

Temperatures in Mendoza for that time of the year are in the 70s and normally there is no rain during Feast time. Nice summer clothing will be appropriate.

Those of you who would like to attend the Feast in Mendoza will not regret your decision. You will have the opportunity to meet hundreds of your brethren from this part of the world and at the same time enjoy the beautiful surroundings. We will help you as much as possible with your reservations.

We look forward to receiving our visitors. We know this will be a great opportunity for all of us to be together in this part of the world and strengthen one another in God's Festival. There will be translation into English for all of the services.

Location of Services: Auditorium of the Hotel Ejercito de los Andes, Mendoza, Argentina.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 8 p.m.

Reservations: You do not need to send money for your reservations now,

but please confirm that you are coming as soon as you decide. You can e-mail us at slangarica@unidachile.org or write to us at Casilla 10384, Santiago, Chile.

Saul Langarica

Australia

Frederick Henry Bay, Hobart, Tasmania

The Feast site in Tasmania for 2004 will again be at the Pines Resort, situated on the tranquil shores of Frederick Henry Bay. The resort is situated 20 minutes from Hobart, Australia's second oldest capital city, and 10 minutes from Hobart Airport.

Prices for on-site chalet accommodations are \$A80 per night twin share and \$20 each extra person. Other types of accommodations are available within 20 minutes drive from the venue.

On-site facilities include a spa, sauna, licensed bistro, heated pool, tennis court, BMX bike track and a games room. Golf, horse riding and seven miles of sheltered ocean beach are close by. Within easy driving distance are historic Port Arthur and Richmond Village, both of which have associations with Tasmania's convict past. Weather at Feast time should be fine and cool.

Location of Services: The Pines Resort, Surf Road, Seven Mile Beach.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Reservations: For those deciding on staying at the resort, bookings can be made by contacting: The Pines Resort, Surf Road, Seven Mile Beach, Tasmania 7170; telephone +61 3 6248 6222; Web site www.pinesresort.com.au.

For further information contact Stephen Clark by e-mail at sclark5@bigpond.com.au or by telephone at +61 7 5547 6596.

Stephen Clark

New South Wales

A Feast of Tabernacles site is being planned for the New South Wales area of Australia, but details had not been confirmed at press time. We expect it to

still be in the Sapphire Coast area. (Check the following Web site for more information about this pretty part of the planet: www.sapphirecoast.com.au.)

We plan to include details in the *Festival Planning Brochure* to be mailed in April. If you have questions in the meantime, you may contact Bruce Dean at bruce_dean@ucg.org.

Noosa, Queensland

Feast 2004 will be the ninth year we have been located at beautiful Noosa, in Queensland, Australia, where the weather is beautiful one day and perfect the next!

Noosa has it all—it is a semitropical paradise with long white sandy beaches, invitingly cool rolling blue surf, one of the most spectacular coastal walks in Australia and a relaxed riverfront where one can have coffee and just watch the world go by.

Beautiful Noosa is situated just one hour's drive from the Brisbane International Airport. Noosa, considered the hub of the beaches north of Brisbane, offers year-round swimming and surfing, fishing and boating, scuba diving, parasailing and whale watching.

Average temperatures for this time of the year are 18 to 27 degrees Celsius (63 to 82 Fahrenheit), with water temperatures a very pleasant 21 degrees

Key Dates to Remember

April 3, 10, 17 U.S. and Canadian head-of-household members should clip out their completed 2004 Festival Registration form (see page 8) and give it to their local Festival advisor at Sabbath services.

Late April *Festival Planning Brochure* to be mailed to member households.

May 22 Notification at services if any sites cannot accept all transfer requests (automatic transfer approval is expected for all U.S. and Canadian sites except Anchorage, Alaska, which requires special application).

June 6 Members attending a U.S. or Canadian Feast site may begin making reservations from the list of accommodations supplied in the *Festival Planning Brochure*.

Celsius (70 Fahrenheit).

Noosa is a very modern beach resort of international standards. There is a range of one- to three-bedroom condominiums and holiday apartments, many situated on the beach or waterfront.

Gourmet dining and international

Steamboat Springs and Lexington Chosen as Singles' Feast Sites

Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and Lexington, Kentucky, have both been designated as sites where singles may want to attend this year. These sites are not focusing messages or seminars toward the singles, but will function as a gathering place for a larger number of singles than other sites.

And while all Feast sites will have a singles' hospitality room to provide the opportunity to meet and plan social activities and singles' events, with a larger number of singles, these sites will probably have more singles' socials and activities than other sites.

It should be noted that the sites will not be planning activities. The singles will do that by working with a designated liaison who will communicate with the Feast coordinator to make sure any events do not conflict with other Festival-sponsored activities. Watch the UCG Singles Web site (www.ucgsingles.org) through the summer for updated information on who to contact for information or to volunteer to help with events at the Feast this year.

While the sites are generally located in the western and eastern parts of the country, it is recognized that not all singles will be able to attend these sites. However, if you are a single who is interested in the opportunity to socialize with a larger group of singles than most other sites will have, then make plans to attend Steamboat Springs or Lexington this year.

If You Want to Transfer to a Site Other Than Your Assigned Site...

Transferring Within the United States or Canada

- U.S. and Canadian head-of-household members should fill out the 2004 Festival Registration Form found on the previous page of this issue of *United News*.
- Indicate your preferred transfer site on the Registration Form.
- This form is to be given to the Festival advisor in your local congregation on **April 3, 10 or 17, 2004**.
- Automatic transfer approval is expected for all U.S. and Canadian sites except Anchorage. See special application form for Anchorage on page 15. Pastors will receive transfer notification by May 22.

Transferring to a Site Outside the United States or Canada

- Any member wishing to transfer to a site outside the U.S. or Canada should contact the Festival coordinator of that site directly. Some contact information is provided in this supplement, with site descriptions, and some additional housing information may be provided in the *Festival Planning Brochure* that will be mailed late April.
- Please do not make non-refundable travel arrangements until you receive an acceptance letter for that site.
- Further information and housing lists will be made available to those accepted for transfer.

Transferring Into the United States or Canada From Other Areas

- Brethren wishing to transfer to a U.S. or Canadian site from another country will automatically be accepted.
- However, please have your minister contact the home office via e-mail at USFestival@ucg.org. The information provided should include the requester's name, number of adults age 20 and over, number of teens, number of those 12 and under and the Feast site requested.
- The home office will forward pertinent information to the respective Festival site coordinators.

Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Feast Information

Due to several deaf/hard-of-hearing (HH) members and interpreters who have already made plans to attend in Alaska for the Feast of Tabernacles in 2004, Alaska will be an officially designated Festival site for the deaf/HH. Currently there is no other site that has several deaf/HH members or interpreters who are committed to attend. We may designate another site later on as those involved finalize their plans. Regardless, we will keep everyone in our United Deaf/HH Program Directory informed regarding the Festival site decisions of our deaf/HH members and interpreters who serve them. We will strive to match up interpreters with deaf/HH members wherever possible.

If you are deaf or hard-of-hearing, or an interpreter or one learning sign language, but are not yet included in our United Deaf/HH Program Directory, please contact Mark or Barbara Welch at mark_welch@ucg.org, or P.O. Box 967, Kellyville, OK 74039. Or you may call 918-247-4325 to be included or to give input. We would like to know what your needs are and what Festival site you plan to attend so we may better serve you.

Mark and Barbara Welch

shopping is a plus for this area.

With Noosa as your base, you can visit "Steve the Crocodile Man," drive to the lovely hinterland behind Noosa with its quaint craft villages, take a boat cruise through the "Everglades," take a tour to Fraser Island (the largest sand island in the world) or take a camel ride to breakfast on the gorgeous beaches of the North Shore.

Organized activities will include youth Bible studies, young adults activities, a get-to-know-you dinner, a dance, a seniors' outing and last, but certainly not least, a family games afternoon in the park.

Location of Services: The Bicentennial Community Centre, Bicentennial Dr., Noosa. The hall has the added advantage of being situated in a beautiful Australian bushland setting.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Reservations: You may contact specific establishments through the Web by searching for Noosa at www.yahoo.com. If you would like assistance, contact Bill Bradford at 26 St. John Close, Parkinson, Queensland 4115, Australia. The phone number is +61 7 3711 5599 and the e-mail address is billbradford@bigpond.com.au. A package can be forwarded to anyone requiring further information.

Bill Bradford

Barbados

Christ Church

The Feast this year will be held at the Amaryllis Beach Resort in Christ Church, Barbados, in the Garrison historic area. The hotel is along the sandy white beach of the south coast.

The resort was totally refurbished and expanded in 2003 including a conference room that accommodates 200 people.

The resort has 150 rooms including hotel and superior rooms that have mini-fridges, and deluxe rooms and one-bedroom suites that have kitchenettes. All rooms are air-conditioned with TV, phone and pay-safes.

A wide range of services and facilities are available, including five restaurants, live entertainment, two pools, a children's wading pool and a hot-water Jacuzzi, Internet café, library, self-service laundry, hairdresser, beauty spa, games room, virtual golf and fitness center. There are a variety of beach activities including snorkeling, volleyball, kayaking and beach tennis.

The room rate is US\$99 per person all-inclusive single or double occupancy plus 7.5 percent VAT. Children under 12 are half price. If you have a family, it is better to request the suites, which would better accommodate children. However there are only 22 suites, so the sooner you book, the better your chances are of getting a suite.

As an incentive to attend the Feast in Barbados, the Barbados Tourism Authority (BTA) will provide a credit of US\$150 per ticket to those staying at Amaryllis. Once the reservation has been made, send the flight information to me and I will forward it on to the BTA and they will give you the credit with the airline.

Location of Services: In the conference center, Amaryllis Beach Resort in Christ Church, Barbados.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7 p.m.

Reservations: To make a room reservation, call directly to the hotel at 1-246-228-4951 and mention that you are with the United Church of God conference.

To register for the Feast, which is different from the hotel reservation, contact Arnold Hampton, P.O. Box 75, Randallstown, MD 21133, e-mail arnold_hampton@ucg.org or phone (410) 655-6265.

Arnold Hampton

British Isles

Winchester, England

The beautiful cathedral town of Winchester in southern England will be the site for the 2004 Feast of Tabernacles in the United Kingdom. Winchester is a historically rich city, once the capital of medieval England and the royal seat of



The Guildhall where services will be held in Winchester, England

King Alfred the Great over 1,100 years ago. This renowned monarch translated parts of the Pentateuch and incorporated into English law many of the laws and statutes enshrined there.

Because of its popularity with local and European visitors, we are encouraging early booking of accommodations to ensure Feastgoers are not disappointed.

Services for the Feast will be held in the appropriately named King Alfred Hall, part of the Victorian-built Guildhall, which can hold over 500 people. It is located in the downtown area of this architecturally beautiful and unspoiled English city. Catered meals are being planned for Holy Days and the Sabbath. Winchester is a small and well-looked-after city with much of the city center designated a pedestrian area. This makes it easy to enjoy the popular shopping streets. A variety of cafés and restaurants is also close by.

Accommodations (hotel, bed-and-breakfast and self-catering) and covered parking are available a few minutes walk from the hall.

The Norman-era Winchester Cathedral, over 550 feet long, is a mere five-minute walk from the meeting hall. Queen Mary Tudor was married to Philip II of Spain here 450 years ago. The medieval banqueting hall called King Arthur's Hall, with its famous round table dating to Tudor times, is a 10-minute walk away.

Guided tours of the inner city will be

available, including the cathedral, the resting place of famous English novelist Jane Austen and Izaak Walton, author of *The Compleat Angler*. There are also daily tours of Winchester School, probably the oldest continuously running school in England (since 1382).

Popular sites like Salisbury, Stonehenge, Southampton and Portsmouth (home of Nelson's flagship, the *Victory*, and remains of Henry VIII's warship, the *Mary Rose*) are all within short distances by car or bus. Also within striking distance by car or bus are the 3,000-year-old fortress site of Old Sarum, Salisbury Cathedral, Bath with its Roman baths, Windsor Castle and the New Forest.

Bus tours will be arranged throughout the Feast to a number of the area's main tourist attractions.

There are good train services from both London Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

For more information, see www.ucg.org.uk/festival/feast_2004.htm.

Location of Services: King Alfred Hall, part of the Guildhall, Winchester, England.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 8 p.m.

Taxes: 17.5 percent V.A.T. is included in prices quoted by hotels and shops. V.A.T. may be claimed back from stores displaying the "Tax Free for Tourists" logo. Please ask the shop for details.

Reservations: Please register with the United Church of God—British Isles Festival Office without delay, seeing that we expect a high response to the opportunity to have the Feast in Winchester. You can do this by e-mailing us at feast@ucg.org.uk or by using our registration form at www.ucg.org.uk/feastreg.htm. We look forward to welcoming you as one of our guests!

You can obtain further information about Winchester by visiting the Tourist Information Centre Web site at www.visitwinchester.co.uk. They can be contacted by phoning them at +44 (0)1962 840500 or e-mailing them at tourism@winchester.gov.uk.

Peter Hawkins

Cameroon

Douala

Douala, the principal port city of Cameroon in central Africa, will host the Feast of Tabernacles in 2004. Lodging is available at a number of hotels in the city including the Meridien, the Akwa Palace and the Ibis.

Approximately 50 people are expected to attend this site. This site is French-speaking only, so any brethren wishing to transfer in need to be fluent in the language. Services will be held at the Church hall in the Bessengue quarter of Douala. Activities will include a family games day and a talent show. A visa and a yellow fever vaccination are required for entry into Cameroon.

Reservations: More information and registration forms may be received by contacting Joel Meeker at

joel_meeker@ucg.org, or (636) 561-4026, or by writing to 926 Ampere Place, Lake Saint Louis, MO 63367, USA.

Joel Meeker

Canada

Collingwood, Ontario

Collingwood, Ontario, is a premier tourist destination located on the scenic southern shoreline of Georgian Bay



Cranberry Resort Pro Shop, Collingwood, Ontario

(Lake Huron) and at the foot of Ontario's highest ski terrain. Blue Mountain will be a maze of warm colors providing a beautiful backdrop for this year's Feast of Tabernacles.

Only a 90-minute drive north from Toronto, Collingwood will enable you to sample food from around the world with over 50 restaurants to suit every taste and budget. The Cranberry Resort offers a wide variety of amenities and activities including indoor pool, whirlpool, games room, exercise room, horseback riding, hiking trails, mountain bike rentals, golf course, kayak rentals and much more. Check it out at www.cranberry-resort.on.ca.

The area also offers miles of scenic walking trails, driving trails, great fishing, bowling, go-karts and shopping in downtown stores or nearby quaint hamlets.

For further information about Collingwood, visit www.georgiantriple.com.

The following Festival activities will be offered: boat tour on the *Georgian Queen*, visit to the scenic caves with a newly installed suspension bridge, seniors' brunch, teen outing and family barbecue.

Location of Services: Cranberry Resort, 19 Keith Ave., R.R. #4, Collingwood, Ontario.

First Service: Wednesday Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: 12 percent.

Garry Lucas and Dennis Horlick

Kelowna, British Columbia

Among the many vacation destinations a visitor can consider in British Columbia, there is one travel constant that never fails to memorably reward visitors. It's a place where, regardless of season, world-class amenities are always available to enjoy. It's a place where the climate is mild and sunshine is something to be expected. It's a spot blessed with spectacular mountain

scenery, where nature cradles pristine lakes and trims them with warm, sandy beaches and blossom-dusted hillsides. It's a haven for recreation all year round—enjoy golfing, boating, windsurfing, swimming, fishing, hiking and camping. It's Kelowna, B.C.! It's often referred to as the Hawaii of Canada.

Kelowna is located in the beautiful Okanagan Valley of British Columbia. This is a major fruit-growing region and has lots of vineyards producing world-class wines. The settled area lies

in the valley along the shores of Lake Okanagan, which is about 120 miles (nearly 200 kilometers) long and between 3 and 6 miles (5 and 10 kilometers) wide.

Kelowna has a metropolitan population of about 100,000. It offers a variety of recreational activities, has many fine restaurants and lots of shopping. There are unending miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking, trail riding and family walks. There are about 18 golf courses within a short drive, and most will be open until the end of October. There are centers for family outings, miniature golf and kids' attractions. For Internet users, a local Web site (www.castanet.net) provides current news, weather and local happenings. The climate in autumn is usually still fairly warm with crisp nights. Rain is not normally a problem as the area is arid. It is a good idea to bring clothing that is suitable for weather in the 50s and 60s Fahrenheit (13 to 18 degrees Celsius).

Motel prices are reasonable, with a selection to meet all budgets. There is a provincial sales tax of 7.5 percent (or 8 percent on hotels) as well as GST, which is 7 percent. Visitors from outside of Canada can apply for a GST rebate. An international airport, just north of town, serves the area with direct flights from Seattle.

Location of Services: Kelowna Community Theatre, 1375 Water St., Kelowna, B.C.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m. The following day's service will be at 2 p.m.

Rainer Salomaa

Mont-Sainte-Anne, Quebec

Quebec City, considered one of the most picturesque cities in North America, provides a spectacular backdrop for observing the Feast of Tabernacles. Here you can sample a taste of Europe with a distinctive French flavor without leav-

ing North America. With tourism a large part of the economy, language is not a problem as most people in the service and hospitality industry speak English.

The Festival location of Mont-Sainte-Anne is a half-hour drive east of Quebec City at Domaine Mont-Sainte-Anne ski resort complex. This serves as our main center for meetings and lodging and has attendance room for just over 300. The condominium and chalet accommodations sit at the base of the ski mountain with sweeping panoramas of the St. Lawrence River. A variety of condos and villas are also available at Chalets Montmorency a few kilometers away. Most units have kitchens/kitchenettes, fireplaces and laundry facilities. Excellent dining is available close by the Festival site or in some of Quebec City's many fine restaurants. French cuisine is renowned, and there are restaurants to suit every taste and budget.

It is an area of scenic beauty situated at the edge of the Laurentian Mountain range with several breathtaking waterfalls. From the top of Montmorency Falls is a sweeping view of the skyline of Quebec City. Just east of Mont-Sainte-Anne is Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Reserve where each fall thousands of migratory snow geese feed on the banks of the St. Lawrence. A popular spot is La Musée de L'abeille (a natural history bee museum) with a winery producing mead (honey wine) and desserts that can be purchased on site. Now open after extensive renovation is the zoo and aquarium. Golf, hiking and horseback riding are available and about an hour's drive further east, at the junction of the Saguenay and St. Lawrence Rivers, several species of migratory whales can be observed. A boat cruise is available to see these magnificent mammals.

Quebec City is rich in history and Old Quebec is a fascinating place. A city bus tour takes in the Plains of Abraham, Battlefield Park and the Citadel of Quebec, as well as a stop for shopping. The walls protecting Old Quebec constitute the largest fortifications still in use in North America. The Old Port is rich in history and a dinner cruise on the St. Lawrence provides fun, fellowship, dancing and a new perspective of Quebec City. Other Festival activities include a family social, family day, teen bowling and a variety show. International visitors enjoy the advantage of a favorable exchange rate with the Canadian dollar. Taxes are 15 percent and part is refundable to Feast-goers from outside Canada.

This year is our last year at the housing prices agreed on in 2001. The prices represent a good value.

Please note: *Visitors should check travel requirements as passports will be needed for flying and birth certificates or photo I.D. will be needed for driving across the border.*

Location of Services: Domaine Mont-Sainte-Anne, 203 rue Val des Neiges, Beauport, Quebec.

First Service: Wednesday Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Graemme Marshall

Regina, Saskatchewan

The United Church of God brethren attending services in the Queen City of Regina, Saskatchewan, will again host

God's annual Feast of Tabernacles. This is our fourth year to serve those traveling to this location. This year the autumn scenery promises to be even more spectacular than usual. The 2003 Festival was a delightful and exciting time for those attending, and this year we anticipate even greater blessings.

Regina is in the center of Canada's vast wheat-producing prairie. The city is a friendly and inviting oasis in this vast expanse of rich harvest landscape. A highlight of the city is the magnificent parliament buildings (surrounded by the 2,300-acre Wascana Park) and its palatial manicured landscape.

Regina, located in the southern central area of Saskatchewan, is a modern city that also retains a certain country charm. Rich in history, it has played a significant role in the developing history of Canada. To experience the history, one can visit the RCMP Centennial Museum. In addition, the Royal Saskatchewan Museum has three galleries that provide a fascinating look at provincial history.

Activities are plentiful and varied, from glow bowling to the Saskatchewan Science Centre with the IMAX theater and its Power House of Discovery with hands-on exhibits that make science fun for young and old. There is also a fine selection of restaurants and fun eating ideas like Applause Feast and Folly Diner Theatre. With attendance expected between 105 and 160, we are able to share most activities together. Many have felt this was an additional blessing.

Also, located just 45 minutes to the west of Regina is the small but vibrant city of Moose Jaw. Rich in history and sites to explore, this adds to the area's activities.

The international airport is located on the western outskirts of Regina and is but a short drive to the center of the city. With the currency exchange, those coming from the United States also receive a 25 percent increase in their spending dollars.

Regina's central location provides shorter driving distances for many scattered brethren; and as a convention city, it supports multiple housing combinations. We will list our main motel below, but if there are special needs, you can go to the Internet and look up additional accommodations on <http://bestlodging.com>. We also suggest contacting Regina Tourism for a visitor's guide through its toll-free number (800) 661-5099, extension 299, or its Web site www.tourismregina.com.

We have reserved a block of rooms at the West Harvest Inn and will conduct services in its Emerald Ballroom. The West Harvest has a Web site available for your perusal, www.westharvest.com. All rooms feature voice mail, data-ports, radios, coffee makers and hair dryers. The hotel/motel also offers free fitness facilities, local and national newspapers, in-room coffee/tea, free local calls and faxes. The health spa has two whirlpools and two steam baths as well as exercise equipment.

Room accommodations are priced at \$79. They have held last year's prices for us.

Location of Services: West Harvest Inn, 4025 Albert St., Regina, Saskatchewan.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: 13 percent—6 percent provincial and 7 percent GST. Visitors coming from outside Canada can apply for a GST rebate.

Glen V. White

St. John's, Newfoundland

We invite you to come share in the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles 2004 in the beautiful city of St. John's, Newfoundland.

Newfoundland was first discovered by John Cabot in 1497 and claimed for the British Empire in 1583 by Sir Humphrey Gilbert. St. John's is the oldest and most easterly port city in North America, and today is the capital of Newfoundland and Labrador.

St. John's has a rich and colorful history, unmatched by any other Canadian city. With a population of 175,000, St. John's is a thriving modern-day city with first-class facilities and services. St. John's offers an enticing combination of old world charm, unique architectural and historic landmarks, fine cuisine and access to spectacular coastlines, wildlife and many other choice attractions.

Shop or just stroll on Water Street, the oldest commercial street in North America or visit Signal Hill for a panoramic view of the harbor and the city. Signal Hill, so named because the arrival of ships was announced from there by a series of flags, was also the site where Marconi received the first transatlantic wireless signal in 1901.

Take a boat tour from St. John's harbor, or one of the numerous boat tours from other villages minutes from the city, to watch whales and seabirds, and view the spectacular coastal scenery.

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador are among the most friendly and hospitable in the world and have retained many aspects of their European heritage, including their accents and humor.

For those who love to walk, St. John's has many scenic walking trails. If you love to eat, we have numerous fine restaurants. If you like to visit scenic or historic sites, you won't be disappointed.

Because of the small number of people, St. John's tends to be a very family-type Feast. With only 80 people, it is easy to get to know each other.

Rooms at the Best Western Traveller's Inn are \$86 double, which includes two full breakfasts from the menu, or \$79 with no breakfast. (Prices are in Canadian dollars.) Children under 12 years of age eat free. Other accommodations are available as well.

For more information about this site, contact David Smith at dave_smith@ucg.org or visit the Newfoundland and Labrador Government home page at www.gov.nf.ca/.

Location of Services: Best Western Traveller's Inn on Kenmount Road.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: Newfoundland has a HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) of 15 percent. For those who are not Canadian citizens a rebate of 7 percent on purchases is available. Hotels and motels also charge a 3 percent accommodation tax.

David Smith

Chile

Calafquén

Once again we are planning to have the Feast of Tabernacles in Calafquén, on the shores of the lake with the same name. Beautiful cabins face the lake and behind them is Villarica, a volcano with permanent snow.

Calafquén is located 800 kilometers to the south of Santiago, Chile, in one of the most beautiful regions of the country with greenery everywhere all year, especially during Feast time.

This Feast site was chosen specially to fulfill the need for a closer and less expensive place for the brethren from the south of Chile. Around 100 Chilean and Bolivian brethren are expected. Members will make their own meals in their cabins. A family atmosphere is created by the many invitations to share meals. The whole site will be taken just with Church people.

Unfortunately because of the size of the place, we do not accept transfers unless there are special circumstances. We do not have English translation for services.

Temperatures will be in the 60s during the Feast time and rain can be expected at any time.

All of the services will be within walking distance from all of the cabins. We are also planning several activities for all ages.

If you speak Spanish and feel you really need this kind of Edenic environment, please contact Saul Langarica at slangarica@unidachile.org or through normal mail to Casilla 10384, Santiago, Chile.

First service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 8 p.m.

Saul Langarica



Called the Venice of France, the lakeside town of Ancey boasts beautiful canals running through the medieval structures at its heart

France

Ancey

Nestled on a mountainside overlooking a beautiful Alpine lake, Les Balcons du Lac d'Ancey (the balconies on Lake Ancey) vacation center will be the site of the French-European Feast of Tabernacles site.

Called the Venice of France, the lakeside town of Ancey boasts beautiful

canals running through the medieval structures at its heart.

Festival attendees here will be able to visit two countries for the price of one since Ancey is located 20 miles south of Geneva, Switzerland. Gateway to the Alps, this region is famous for its breathtaking scenery, including Mont Blanc (the highest mountain in Europe), the historic city of Geneva and delicious cuisine including cheese fondue, raclette (a cheese dish too delicious to describe in only few words) and crisp white wines.

Autumn leaves are colorful and bright around Ancey. Temperatures can vary from Indian-summer warm to autumn cool, and walking in the Alps usually requires a jacket.

Lodging, meals and services will all be on-site at Les Balcons du Lac d'Ancey vacation center. It is not necessary to rent a car during the Feast. The site is all-inclusive, meaning that one very reasonable per-person cost covers lodging and three meals per day including wine with lunch and dinner.

Services will be held alternately in French and English with simultaneous translation offered via portable FM radios (to be brought by those needing them).

Festival activities will include many opportunities to fellowship with Church members from different countries, coach excursions to Ancey, Geneva and Mont Blanc, a chance to hike in the Alps, as well as opportunities for wine tasting and shopping.

If there is sufficient interest, we will also offer an organized tour through Switzerland following the Feast. Points of interest would include a drive around Lake Geneva, the medieval village of Gruyere, the picturesque Swiss capital Berne, the historic lake city of Luzern, the village of Zermat at the base of the

Matterhorn and, weather permitting, a cogwheel train visit to the stunning Jungfrauoch high on the crest of the Alps, around 11,000 feet (3,500 meters) high.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 9 p.m.

Reservations: More information and registration forms may be received by contacting Joel Meeker at joel_meeker@ucg.org, or (636) 561-4026, or by writing to 926 Ampere Place, Lake Saint Louis, MO 63367,

USA. Space is limited this year, please apply early.

Joel Meeker

Germany

Schluchsee

Set on Lake Schluchsee in southern Germany, in a beautiful area just 10 miles (16 kilometers) from the Black Forest's highest mountain, the Feldberg (1,493 meters, 4,860 feet), is the picturesque town of Schluchsee.

Lake Titisee, with its scenic town of Titisee, is a 20-minute drive from Schluchsee, and the famous Rhine river waterfall in Schaffhausen/Neuhausen, Switzerland, is about 60 minutes by car.

Temperatures in October can still be mild, but the evenings can be chilly because of Schluchsee's altitude (900 meters, approximately 3,000 feet).

Accommodations for transfer guests are available in selected hotels and vacation apartments. Vacation apartments offer kitchenettes. Half-board arrangements are available in most hotels. Lodging costs range from \$50 to \$100 for a vacation apartment and from \$40 upwards per person for hotel accommodations, which includes breakfast.

Transfer guests can make their own reservations if they wish; lodging information is available via the Schluchsee Web site, www.schluchsee.de.

The hall where services will be held is within walking distance of most lodging units within the main village area.

Direct German federal railway (Bundesbahn) service is available via Freiburg to Schluchsee. However, car rental is recommended for ease of transportation and sightseeing. Schluchsee is located approximately 180 miles (300 kilometers) south of the Frankfurt International Airport, or 50 miles (80 kilometers) northwest of the Zurich International Airport.

Expected attendance is approximately 200. Most services will be held in German, with a simultaneous translation into English. We are pleased to welcome special guest speaker Gary Antion, who will present three lectures using material from the Ambassador Bible Center.

The Feast calendar can be viewed at www.vkg.org/PDF/fot2004.pdf.

Location of Services: Grosser Kurssaal, Kurhaus Schluchsee (next to the Rathaus, behind the tourism office).

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Reservations: Visitors wishing to attend should send an e-mail to fo@gutenachrichten.org or visit the UCG-Germany Web site at www.vkg.org/fot.php (an e-mail address is required for registration).

Paul Kieffer

Guatemala

Antigua

This year, the brethren from Guatemala will celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day in the beautiful colonial city of Antigua,

Guatemala. Antigua is 30 to 40 minutes from Guatemala City (the capital) and has a warm, pleasant climate all year.

Antigua has beautiful colonial architecture from the time when Spain conquered the Americas. For that reason the town has many antique houses and stone streets where tourists may stroll through the market filled with handicrafts and enjoy the coffee stores and restaurants.

The Feast will be full of activities—activities that will help the love between brothers and sisters in the faith grow. For that, we will have a program with a breakfast for elders, a dance for youth, a feast for the children, a night for ladies and gentlemen and an entertaining afternoon for ladies. And of course, we will have a talent show.

We will have sermons and short sermons every day to help us remember the plans of our God and our hope while we walk in this road of life, waiting for the world of God and His blessings. Again this year we will offer English translations.

Location of Services: Contreras's Saloon, close to the central park in Antigua, Guatemala.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7 p.m.

Taxes: US \$30 (airport departure tax).

Information/Reservations: For more information contact Luis Mundo: by phone, 00-502-256-1341 (Spanish only); by mail, P.O. Box 1064, 01901 Guatemala City, Guatemala; by e-mail: drmundotello@hotmail.com

Luis Mundo Tello

Italy

Sabaudia (Rome)

This year we'll be celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles at the beautiful seaside town of Sabaudia (Rome). With



The beach by the hotel used for the Feast in Sabaudia, Italy

God's help we found four-star hotel quality at a very good price, as shown below. Also, shuttle pickups and transportation from/to the Leonardo Da Vinci International Airport will be provided before and after the Feast.

The English language is spoken and understood by a good number of Italian brethren who are looking forward to meeting you and fellowshiping with you. Church services will be held alternately in the English and Italian languages, with simultaneous translation. Headphones will be provided on-site. To give you time to rest from the long flight, there will not be a church service on Wednesday evening, Sept. 29. However, there will be two church services on Sept. 30.

Our Feast hotels have their own private beach with sun umbrellas and sun beds, as they are situated right on a golden sandy beach, facing one of the most limpid and uncontaminated stretches of water in the Tyrrhenian Sea. This means that in our spare time, and especially during the Family Day, we can enjoy swimming, beach volleyball and table tennis, at no extra cost. Also, a brand-new beauty center, with gym and sauna, will be available to all Feast participants at a very affordable price. The place promises relaxing and fun opportunities for our children, young brethren, singles and families.

The hotel management has offered us the very special price of 51 to 57 euros (approximately \$65 to \$72) per night, per adult person, including full board (that is, three meals a day, with mineral water, local wine and taxes). All hotel rooms are equipped with telephone, TV, air conditioner and shower. Also, discounts are offered for children who will be sharing a room with their parents or relatives: 50 percent discount for children 3 to 6 years old; 30 percent discount for children 7 to 12 years old. There is no cost for children under 2.

In regard to food, the Italian cuisine is one of the richest and most delicious and exquisite in the world. The hotel's staff can speak English and their restaurants can host large groups of brethren so that we can enjoy our meals all together in Christian fellowship. The chef knows the distinction of clean and unclean foods, and the restaurant staff is looking forward to welcoming and serving us diligently.

Sunny dunes, lakes and the national park of Circeo surround the sea town of Sabaudia. The entire area appears to the visitor as an incomparable witness of the perfect fusion of natural elements, which draws us closer to our Creator God, the greatest artist of all. Its climate in autumn is very mild: night



The beach by the hotel used for the Feast in Sabaudia, Italy

and day temperatures may be 65 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

Sabaudia is located only an hour from the fascinating and historical city of Rome and approximately an hour and a half from Naples. This makes our Feast site especially suitable for cultural tours to various important historical places like Pompeii, which was destroyed by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 B.C., World War II sites such as Montecassino, Anzio (with the Allies cemetery) and, of course, the famous Roman historical sites. Just think about the Coliseum, Imperial Forum, Paul's prison and tomb, Christian catacombs, the Vatican museums and several other places and monuments that are a witness to the persecutions of true Chris-

tianity. It is history coming alive before our eyes.

Our Feast site gives the opportunity to easily reach and visit other beautiful and famous places before and after the Feast like Amalfi, Capri, Ischia and the Pontine Islands. More information about this can be sent upon request.

Our young Italian brethren plan to offer a Family Day on the beach, an evening dance and a talent show. If you can either sing or play the piano or any other musical instrument, or if you have any other artistic talent that may entertain your brethren at the Feast, your talent will be very welcome. This is true, also, if you are a choir singer or if you can play the piano to accompany church songs. Your involvement in making the Feast a greater success to God's glory will be appreciated.

The small group of Italian brethren hopes that you and your family can make it to Italy this year. We are looking forward to welcoming you and fellowshiping with you in Jesus Christ.

Reservations: Feast information or registration should be requested as soon as possible, by e-mailing directly to carmelo.anastasi@tin.it or through the Web site www.labuonotizia.org or by phone/fax: +39-035.4523840 or by writing to the following postal address: *La Buona Notizia*, Via Comonte 14/A, 24068 Seriate (BG), Italy.

Carmelo Anastasi

Jamaica

Ocho Rios

Jamaica, one of the Caribbean's brightest tropical jewels, is an island of intoxicating natural beauty—from lush rainforest and mountainous terrain to spectacular waterfalls, sun-drenched beaches and turquoise waters.

This year's Feast will be held at the Renaissance Jamaica Grande Resort in Ocho Rios. Its exquisitely landscaped grounds, coupled with its spectacular open-air lobby with waterfalls flowing into the one-of-a-kind Fantasy Pool, create a lasting impression. The genuine warmth and friendliness of its people coupled with professional service will make your Feast experience one that will be long remembered!

The resort is about 90 minutes from Sangster International airport, Montego Bay. Round-trip transfers can be arranged through the hotel for US\$30 per person.

The resort has five restaurants, plus a beach grill for surfside burgers and refreshments; a 1,350-foot white sand beach; three swimming pools, Jacuzzi and an array of land and water activities.

Club Mongoose, a fully supervised children's activity center, provides programs for kids aged 2 to 12 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. complimentary.

The all-inclusive prices per room per night are: single occupancy, US\$135; double occupancy, US\$180; triple occupancy, US\$240; junior suite, US\$300; 2-bedroom suite, US\$500. A child 12 years and under sharing with one adult or three children 12 years and under sharing with two adults are free.

These rates include the following:

- Rooms with private balcony overlooking the bay or Caribbean Sea.

- Full buffet breakfast daily.
- Lunch from a choice of restaurants.

- Dinner from a choice of restaurants or Lavish Theme Party Buffet.
- Late night snacks.
- Unlimited beverages.
- All hotel taxes and gratuities.
- Cool Runnings sitting fee—US\$10 per person per meal.

Reservations: (1) Go to the Caribbean Web page (www.ucg-caribbean.org) and download a hotel reservation form.

(2) Complete the form and fax it with credit card guarantee to Paula Williams or Lorraine Plummer, (876) 974-2289. Check payments should be sent to Renaissance Jamaica Grande Resort, Accounts Department, c/o Marriott Biscayne Bay, 1633 North Bayshore Dr., Miami, FL 33132.

Direct any other queries to Dulsa Donaldson, sales manager by e-mail at ddonaldson@rhijagrande.com or Sheryl Clarke, sales coordinator by e-mail at sclarke@rhijagrande.com, fax (876) 974-2162, telephone (876) 974-2210/19. All reservations must be accompanied by two nights' deposit and must be received by June 18, 2004.

(3) After sending the application and housing deposit, please send a copy of the completed application to Kingsley O. Mather, fax (242) 364-5566, phone (242) 324-3169, mail P.O. Box N-8873, Nassau, Bahamas, or e-mail ucg-caribbean@coralwave.com.

For persons who do not book rooms through the group allocation, a registration fee will be charged by the hotel. The applicable registration cost will be US\$200 per person, this will give those persons booking outside of the group block the opportunity to attend Feast activities. This registration fee will be payable to the hotel on check-in.

Location of Services: Portland Ballroom of the Renaissance Jamaica Grande Resort, Ocho Rios, Jamaica

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7 p.m.

Information can also be downloaded from www.ucgcaribbean.org. For more information on the Renaissance Jamaica Grande, browse its Web site: www.renaissancejamaica.com.

Kingsley O. Mather

Kenya

Jambo (hello) from East Africa, whose diverse landscapes, charming people and inspiring wildlife will captivate your heart. *Keribu* (welcome) from 200 Kenyan, Tanzanian and Ugandan brethren who hope you will join them for God's Feast this year in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Feast site complex is an upscale conference center with some accommodations for our local brethren. International guests have several choices of hotels in the capital city, which boasts excellent restaurants. Feast group activities will include a game-drive safari through Nairobi National Park, feeding giraffes at the Giraffe Center, hiking in the Ngong Hills, visiting the Kenya National Museum and Family Day activities.

An optional post-Feast safari is being

organized to visit one of Kenya's world-class game preserves. East Africa promises to form a permanent



Feeding giraffes near Nairobi, Kenya

bond with those who courageously come to experience her.

Reservations: For more information, see our Web site at www.ucgeast-africa.org, or contact John Elliott by e-mail at john_elliott@ucg.org.

John Elliott

Malawi

If you are looking for a unique location to keep the Feast of Tabernacles this year, Malawi may be the place for you. The Feast will be held on beautiful Lake Malawi, the third largest lake in Africa. Lake Malawi is about 362 miles long and 10 to 50 miles wide.

Malawi is a peaceful country with very friendly people. There are plenty of activities that you can participate in, like safaris to game parks, sailing, kayaking and snorkeling. Malawi is a landlocked country in Africa bordered by Tanzania to the north and Zambia to the west.

The climate is mild with high temperatures around 27 degrees Celsius (80 degrees Fahrenheit) at that time of year. Entry to Malawi is easy, as an American passport is all that is necessary and visas are not required. An airport fee must be paid before leaving the country.

The lodge is accessible by air from Lilongwe, which is about 170 miles from the Feast site. British Airways and South African Airways have many flights to Malawi. Keep in mind that Malawi is in a malaria area and precautions should be taken. The Feast occurs during the dry season, which reduces the risk.

Housing is available at Nkopola Lodge in Malawi. All rooms at the lodge have air conditioning and digital satellite television. The lodge has gear available for the water sport of your choice, including waterskiing, snorkeling, windsurfing or canoeing. Rates are about \$60 a day per person at the present exchange rate. This includes both breakfast and dinner. Other accommodations at a reduced price are also available in the area. The lodge is located within walking distance of the hall where services are held.

Lake Malawi offers the opportunity for a unique African experience.

Reservations: If you are interested, call Bill Jahns +27 11 868 1838 or send an e-mail to bill_jahns@ucg.org.

Bill Jahns

Malaysia

Melaka

Southeast Asia's newest Feast site is located in Melaka on the shores of the Strait of Malacca. Melaka (Malacca in English) is a historical city, bearing a fascinating mixture of Chinese, Islamic and European culture. Portuguese, Dutch, Islamic, Chinese and British architectural styles influence city structures. It was one of Asia's greatest trading ports and is still a major tourist destination in Malaysia. The area also highlights delicious Straits Chinese cooking, as well as chicken and beef satay, which originated in Malay cuisine.

Just a few of the local attractions include the Malacca Sultanate Palace, Malacca Reptile Park, Crocodile and Butterfly Farms, Malaysia-in-Miniature and a wide variety of historical sites and landmarks. Group activities are being organized for members.

Brethren from Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, along with international visitors, will meet for services at the Riviera Bay Resort on the seafloor. We are expecting at least 40 brethren from the surrounding Asian region. All services will be conducted in English.

Most brethren plan to stay together at the Riviera Bay Resort. The resort has offered us the following preliminary rates:

- Executive room (two persons, with breakfast) 160 Malaysian ringgits (US\$42 including taxes) per room per night.
- Family suite (four persons, with breakfast) 280 Malaysian ringgits (US\$74) per night.
- Three bedroom suites are also available.

Please contact Jeff Caudle first regarding your accommodation needs at the Riviera Bay Resort, rather than contacting the hotel directly. A block booking has already been arranged, which benefits the whole group. We also hope to improve upon the accommodation pricing if sufficient interest is shown in this site. The Riviera Bay Resort can be found on www.meritus-hotels.com.

The resort offers three restaurants (Chinese, European and Italian), two lounges, tennis and squash courts, swimming pool and whirlpool, exercise gym, sauna, water sports and horseback riding. The resort is a short 15-minute taxi ride from Melaka where you will find shopping malls, bazaars, restaurants and many landmarks.

International visitors are advised to fly into Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, or Singapore. Taxis can be hired directly from the Kuala Lumpur airport and reach the resort in about two hours. Brethren traveling by taxi from Singapore arrive at the resort in about 2½ hours' time. Group transportation by coach may be arranged from Singapore if desired, in conjunction with the Singaporean and Indonesian brethren. Gordon Barr at Travel Gallery can assist North American visitors with airline, ground transportation and other travel needs.

A wide variety of tourism information is available on Tourism Malaysia's Web site www.tourism.gov.my. If you

are interested or planning in joining us for the Feast in Melaka, please contact us as soon as possible. We very much look forward to welcoming you to Malaysia!

Location of Services: Riviera Bay Resort, Jalan Tanjung Kling, Malacca, Malaysia. Phone +60-6-315 1111.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Reservations: To register for the Feast and for further information about accommodations and this site, please contact Jeff Caudle, P.O. Box 22, Auckland 1015, New Zealand; e-mail jeff_caudle@ucg.org; phone +64-9-817 5855; or fax +64-9-813 9182.

For airline and ground transportation assistance, contact Gordon Barr at Travel Gallery, 1388 Walnut St., Pasadena, CA 91106; telephone (800) 858-6999 (North America toll-free) or (626) 577-9717; fax (626) 577-0577; or e-mail at gordon@travelgallery.com. Informa-



Riviera Bay Resort, Melaka, Malaysia (photo by S. Samuthiran)

tion is also listed at www.travel-gallery.com.

Jeff Caudle

Mexico

Guanajuato

Guanajuato City is the capital of the state that goes by the same name. It is one of the most important historical and cultural colonial cities of Mexico and the world, and will host the Feast this year once again. As always, the Mexican Feast will be celebrated with the hospitality and warmth of the Latin brethren.

The musical trace of its cobblestone streets, its peaceful squares and gardens, and the beauty of its houses and buildings give Guanajuato City a nostalgic and romantic touch. It is legendary for its literature, culture and beauty.

Guanajuato represents one of the finest towns for colonial architecture in Mexico and was designated a "World Heritage Zone." A unique feature of Guanajuato City is the labyrinth of tunnels under the city. This was once a riverbed, but repeated flooding forced the residents to divert the river.

Some of the Feast activities will include a children's party, fun activities for our young people and a gala night with dinner and dance. Once again this year we are going to have a typical night stroll and music show through the streets of Guanajuato. Other activities will include several Bible studies throughout the week.

The five-star hotel Real de Minas will be host hotel for the Feast. It is located about 25 minutes walking distance from the downtown area and about 30 minutes by car from the Leon Guanajuato International Airport where commercial flights arrive daily. We recommend taking the airport transportation to the hotel. We will be holding services and Bible studies in the most beautiful old hacienda Torremangana Hall. We will provide simultaneous translation from Spanish to English.

Standard hotel room costs for internationals will be 600 pesos (exchange rate as of Feb. 11: 10.85 pesos per dollar) per night for double or triple occupancy.

Master suites are also available at 1,158.30 pesos per night. The hotel will provide optional meals at affordable prices.

Guanajuato's climate is very pleasant, with temperatures from 53 to 76 degrees Fahrenheit. The area is about 2,050 feet above sea level, and nights and early mornings can be chilly enough for a sweater. A mild rainy season lasts from April to September, but might extend a few days into October.

Guanajuato is near the famous cities of San Miguel Allende and Dolores Hidalgo. Tours are available daily.

Reservations: For hotel reservations contact the hotel at: Srita. Velia Ortega, Departamento de Reservations (Reservations Department), Hotel Real de Minas Guanajuato; telephone: 011-52 473-7322510; fax: 011-52 473-7327508; e-mail: veliaortega@infotel.com.

Lauro Roybal

New Zealand

Napier

The seaport city of Napier overlooks the Pacific Ocean in the Hawke's Bay region of New Zealand's North Island. This eastern seacoast area is well known for its warm Mediterranean-type climate, fine wineries and world famous art deco and Spanish mission architecture. There are some 40 vineyards and wineries in the Hawke's Bay region, a number with restaurants on their premises. Napier is a popular seaside tourist destination for Kiwis and international visitors of all ages.

Domestic air service is available from two major international airports—Auckland and Wellington. Car rentals and coach service are also offered around the country. Napier is about six hours' drive by car from Auckland, and four hours' drive from Wellington.

Services will be held in the Napier War Memorial Centre, located on the oceanfront in downtown Napier. The main meeting room enjoys a panoramic view of Hawke's Bay and the Pacific Ocean. Details, photos and Webcam shots of the War Memorial Centre can be found at www.venues.co.nz.

A wide range of accommodations is available near the War Memorial Centre, on or near Marine Parade—some within walking distance. Napier and neighboring towns offer establishments ranging from four-star hotels to motels, lodges, homes and camping grounds. Prices range from NZ\$40-200 per night.

Other less expensive accommodations are also available. Two good accommodation Web sites are www.aatravel.co.nz and www.jasons.com.

Local activities in Napier and the Hawke's Bay region include deep-sea fishing, windsurfing, jet boating and tandem skydiving. A large, inexpensive hot saltwater pool facility has been completed next to the War Memorial Centre itself. The National Aquarium of New Zealand and the Splash Planet water park are located in or near Napier. Some visitors might enjoy a visit to a gannet colony along the coast, or a swim with dolphins at Marineland of New Zealand. A wide variety of tourist information and activities is available on the Hawke's Bay Web site at www.hawkesbaynz.com.

Location of Services: Napier War Memorial Conference Centre, 48 Marine Parade, Napier.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Reservations: For further information, please contact Jeff Caudle, P.O. Box 22, Auckland 1015, New Zealand; e-mail jeff_caudle@ucg.org; phone +64-9-8175855; or fax +64-9-8139182.

Jeff Caudle

Peru

Huanchaco

Once again we will be celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles in Huanchaco, Peru, a small town near Trujillo, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Trujillo is located 348 miles north of Lima. You can get to Trujillo either by bus or by plane. It takes eight hours by bus and 50 minutes by plane. A round-trip bus ticket is about US\$50 per person and a plane ticket to and from is about \$140. We expect warm weather during the day and a little wind during the evenings.

Hotel prices vary from \$20 to \$50 a night for a double bed room in Huanchaco. If you prefer to stay in Trujillo, prices vary from \$30 to \$80 a night. Also if you stay in Trujillo you will have to consider transportation expenditures. Food is not expensive and in Huanchaco there are several places where you can enjoy good meals.

We will be providing English translations this year, but have limited space for transfers.

Reservations: For further details or to request an application form, contact Manuel Quijano, Apartado 18-0766, Lima, Peru; by e-mail at smquija@terra.com.pe; or by phone at +51-1-4486004.

Manuel Quijano

Philippines

Baguio City

Baguio City will once again be one of the Feast sites for this year's Feast of Tabernacles in the Philippines.

Baguio is a city in the northern mountains of Luzon some 260 kilometers (160 miles) north of Manila. Being a temperate place in this predominantly warm and humid tropical country, it has officially been known as the summer capital of the Philippines. Philippine

presidents would usually stay and hold office during the summer months at the Baguio Mansion House.

As in the past three consecutive years, services will be held at the conference hall of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) Ang Ating Tahanan ("our home") grounds. The hall where services will be held can accommodate as many as 150 Feastgoers.

The GSP grounds have cottages and dormitory-type accommodations where Feastgoers can lodge within walking distance of services. But for those who are more adventurous and prefer to stay outside the Festival grounds, nearby hotels and inns are also available. Cost of accommodations ranges from US\$4 per person per day for dormitory-type accommodations to US\$60 per night for hotel room accommodations.

We are expecting some 100 to 120 Feastgoers, mainly from the Luzon island region, to attend this site. Again, our international brethren are always invited and are most welcome to rejoice with us in keeping the Feast this year in this beautiful mountain city! We are looking forward to as many international brethren as possible coming to enjoy the Feast with us this year in Baguio City.

Location of Services: Conference hall of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) Ang Ating Tahanan grounds in Baguio City, Philippines.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 6:30 p.m.

Reservations: Those interested may get in touch with Rey Evasco by e-mail at ucgmnl@pacific.net.ph or by phone at +63 (917) 814 7826 or by mail at MCPO Box 4774, Makati City 1287, Philippines.

Rey M. Evasco

Davao City

Davao City, the largest in the Mindanao region, is believed to be the most peaceful among the big cities in the nation. Located just 1½ hours by jet south of Manila (about \$60 airfare, one way), it is blessed to be outside the typhoon belt affecting most of the country yearly. Breezy and mild temperatures range from 26 to 32 Celsius at that time of the year.

As the "fruit basket of the country," it has a wide assortment of fruits, including exotic ones. In addition, rare and beautiful tropical flowering plants flourish. Davao is also home to the Philippine monkey-eating eagle, reputed to be the largest of its kind in the world. Being one of those endangered species inhabiting its nearby mountains, it is now mostly bred in captivity and therefore easy to see.

Beautiful white sand beaches lined with coconut trees abound along the shores, lapped by clear waters reflecting warm blue skies. Most resorts maintain international standards. The present currency value of US\$1=55 pesos gives good mileage to the U.S. dollar.

Davao international airport connects directly with flights to and from Singapore and other south Asian countries. Davao also connects to the rest of the country by land, sea and air transport. Most of Davao City's approximately 2,000 taxi units use two-way radio transceivers.

The Festival venue this year will again be at the GSP Regional Training Camp in Toril, Davao City. It is about 15 kilometers southwest of downtown Davao and about a kilometer from the coast. All housing facilities have screened windows. In addition some rooms are air-conditioned. Meals will be served in the screened dining hall as well. Three meals plus accommodation is about \$5.50 per day. The camp facilities and ambience enhance fellowship and our being called out of this world.

A beach resort one kilometer from the GSP Camp is also available. A room or cottage with six beds costs \$16 to \$20 per day. It has cold and hot water with private toilet and bath.

The cost of meals will depend on the type of order. Downtown five-star buffets costs about \$9 per person. Rates such as this already include taxes. Tips are not customary.

Services will be conducted in English (with translation into Cebuano).

Location of Services: The main GSP convention hall.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7 p.m.

Reservations: For more details or reservations, please contact Davao Festival coordinator Edmond D. Macaraeg through any of these means: P.O. Box 81840, 8000 Davao City, Philippines; telephone +63-82 241-0733; fax/ phone: +63-82 241-0150; mobile phone +63-918-904-4444; or e-mail: ed_macaraeg@ucg.org. Or you may also check our Web site: www.ucg.org.ph for application forms and updates. Hope to see you there!

Edmond D. Macaraeg

Iloilo City

One of the three Feast sites for UCG Philippines will be held once again in Punta Villa Beach Resort in Iloilo City, which is located in the Visayas Islands in the central part of the Philippines. About 283 miles from Manila, it is the gateway to the flourishing Western Visayas region. Iloilo's climate is tropical. The temperature ranges from 27 to 32 degrees Celsius (82 to 90 Fahrenheit) throughout the year. It has two main seasons—rainy (June to September) and dry (October to May).

You can travel to Iloilo from other parts of the Philippines in style. By air, there are jets daily from Manila, which take about an hour for a one-way fare ranging from US\$45 to US\$50. By sea, sailing time is about 20 hours from Manila for a one-way fare ranging from US\$18 to US\$30. Passenger jeepneys, metered taxis, buses and private cars regularly ply the city's public roads.

A visit to Iloilo is a trip back to the past, without losing touch with the present. One can still find scores of neo-classical structures dotting the streets. Most of these are ancestral homes, mansions built during the Spanish era; reminiscent of a glorious past. Within the city, one can find a few surviving century-old homes and churches in the city and nearby municipalities, another facet of Iloilo's rich heritage.

Iloilo has stretches of seaside communities and beach resorts. Scuba diving, swimming and snorkeling can be done off Guimaras Island, a 15-minute ride on a motorized boat (banca). The

underwater seascapes are some of the most undisturbed in the country.

Above all, you'll experience the love, warmth and hospitality of the wonderful brethren.

Expected attendance is 120 or more.

Room rates are as follows: Executive rooms with hot/cold bath, TV and refrigerator—US\$25; double queen-sized bed rooms with hot/cold bath, TV and refrigerator—US\$20; standard double bed rooms with hot/cold bath and TV—US\$16.

Morning services are a daily feature, balanced by a variety of afternoon social activities and sports except on the Holy Days.

If anyone would like to take a side-trip to one of the best beaches in the world, Boracay Island Resort is highly recommended.

Location of Services: Coral Ballroom, Punta Villa Resort (fully-air conditioned).

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Reservations: For more details, bookings or reservations, contact Florante G. Siopan, P.O. Box 713, 6100 Bacolod City, Philippines; by telephone +63-34 708-3005 and +63-34 435-3231 and (cell phone) +63-9187571349; or by e-mail florante_siopan@ucg.org.

Florante Siopan

Rwanda

Muhazi

Beautiful Lake Muhazi in north-central Rwanda will be the site of the Feast of Tabernacles for 2004. Attendance at this French and Kinyarwanda-speaking site is expected to be about 60. Lodging, meals and services will be in a house and on its grounds on the lakeshore. Meals will be prepared by those attending this site. Visitors would need to stay in Kigali and commute to the site each day via a 45-minute taxi ride.

Activities will include a family activity day, a talent show and Bible studies.

At the time of writing no visa was required for U.S. and most European citizens. Nationals of other countries should check with the Rwandan embassy in their country. A yellow fever vaccination may be required for entry.

Reservations: More information and registration forms may be received by contacting Joel Meeker at joel_meeker@ucg.org, or (636) 561-4026, or by writing to 926 Ampere Place, Lake Saint Louis, MO 63367, USA.

Joel Meeker

South Africa

George

For the past nine years the UCG in South Africa has kept the Feast at Uvongo on the south coast of Natal. Due to the increase in numbers and the long traveling distances, especially for brethren living in the Western Cape, we decided to add another site in South Africa. An appropriate venue for services has been secured in the town of George in the Southern Cape. Situated along the beautiful Garden Route between the Outeniqua Mountains and the Indian Ocean, George is a truly won-

derful world tomorrow.

Visitors can enjoy the scenic beauty of a warm sea, natural lakes and forests. Just over the mountain are the famous Cango caves. George also has a very popular railway museum and a steam train that winds its way over lakes and rivers, through forests and sections alongside the sea to the ever-popular town of Knysna approximately 50 kilometers from George.

The town of George has an airport and is 450 kilometers from Cape Town Inter-



Scenery in the George, South Africa, area

national airport.

Location of Services: The conference room of the George Municipal Town Hall, which comfortably seats 90 people.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Information/Reservations: For further information, please visit the following Web sites: www.ucgrsa.org (the Web site for the United Church of God in Southern Africa), www.georgetourism.co.za and www.sacape.co.za. You can contact the George Tourism Bureau at info@georgetourism.co.za or reservations@georgetourism.co.za.

To let us know you are planning to come, please e-mail Stan Botha at stan_botha@ucg.org.

Stan Botha

Uvongo

If you would like to enjoy the Feast near the shores of a warm ocean, with friendly brethren and a relaxing environment, you should consider coming to Uvongo, South Africa! Situated about 120 kilometers (80 miles) south of Durban, on the edge of the Indian Ocean, the area is well known for its subtropical climate. The United Church of God has celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles here each year since 1995.

Visitors will enjoy the small-town atmosphere that means you often meet other members by chance. If you have access to the Internet, check out the photos of the 2003 Festival activities and the Festival schedule at www.ucgrsa.org, which also has links to other South African sites. Links include Web sites of the South African Tourism Board; a local Uvongo Web site and several others to help plan your visit and make your stay memorable.

Overseas visitors will find that excellent quality hotel accommodations and meals are very affordable. Lush tropical vegetation surrounds the area. Sugar cane fields and tea plantations are a few kilometers inland. A steam train takes passengers to a nearby restaurant for a cream tea after chugging an hour or so through the countryside. Youngsters paddle down the river that runs into the sea near St. Michael's, a few minutes drive from the hall.

Because there are so many areas to visit and enjoy, it is worthwhile for visitors arriving by plane to hire a car from the Durban airport. However, the Festival activities are all close to Uvongo, so if you can arrange transportation to the Feast site, a rental car is not absolutely essential. Temperatures are from the lower 70s Fahrenheit (lower 20s Celsius) with a 10-degree variation. Feastgoers should take note that the Feast falls during the rainy season, though we often have just the right weather for activities!

Accommodations are mostly self-catering, with a wide variety of two- or three-bedroom holiday apartments available. Hotels are scarce, but there are two in close proximity to the hall. The area is a premier tourist attraction so there are many restaurants as well as shopping centers that cater to most needs.

Accommodation costs will range from \$25 to \$50 per day for self-catering units. Hotel rates fall into the same price range per person per day, inclusive of dinner, bed and breakfast. Uvongo is situated close to a golf course and other sporting activities such as tennis, horse riding, swimming and surfing (the area enjoys a warm sea current).

There are also a number of scenic drives, such as the well-known Oribi Gorge. Another place of interest, especially for overseas visitors, is the Zulu village near Durban. Attendance is expected to be about 270.

Location of Services: Uvongo Town Hall.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: There is a 14 percent VAT. Visitors may request a refund for the tax on souvenirs, etc., at the point of departure if they have receipts.

Reservations: Visitors interested in attending or who need more information should contact André van Belkum by e-mail at andre_van_belkum@ucg.org or by telephone at +27 (31) 267-1109. If dialing from within South Africa the area code is 031. Festival accommodations are described in the Festival Brochure on www.ucgrsa.org.

Bill Jahns

Togo

Kpalime

Members from Togo and Benin will celebrate the Feast at a private school complex in the town of Kpalime about 75 miles north of the capital city of Lomé. About 50 people are expected to attend this French-speaking site. As this site is French-speaking only, anyone wishing to transfer in needs to be fluent in the language. Lodging, meals and services will be at the site and those attending the Feast will prepare the meals.

Activities will include hikes, a family games day, soccer matches and a talent show. A visa and a yellow fever vaccination are required for entry into Togo.

Reservations: More information and registration forms may be received by contacting Joel Meeker at joel_meeker@ucg.org, or (636) 561-4026, or by writing to 926 Ampere Place, Lake Saint Louis, MO 63367, USA.

Joel Meeker

Tonga

Mu'a

If you like a relaxing, enjoyable and friendly environment, Tonga will be one of the best Feast sites for you. The Feast will be held again in Mu'a, which is 12 miles from Nuku'alofa, the capital.

This year the attractions include scenic tours with wonderful views, as well as visits to historic sites. Coral reef tours and snorkeling will be available. In addition, traditional dancing and dinner at the sandy beach of Good Samaritan Inn would also be interesting for visitors. There is a lot of beautiful beach that is safe for swimming, picnics or coastal walks.

The temperature usually ranges between 20 and 25 degrees Celsius (68 and 77 Fahrenheit).

Nuku'alofa, the capital, offers a variety of good hotels and motels. The prices range from T\$65 to around T\$150 per night.

Accommodations available include: International Dateline Hotel, telephone +676 23-411, fax +675 23-410; Harbour View Motel, telephone +676 25-488, fax +675 25-490; Nuku'alofa Hotel, telephone +676 24-244, fax +675 23-154; and Seaview Lodge, telephone +676 23-709, fax +675 26-906.

Location of Services: The Church Building, Mu'a, Tonga.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Reservations: Visitors interested in attending or who need further information, please contact Heamasi Ta'ufu'ou by e-mail at htaufou@kalianet.to, by telephone at +676 29165 or by mail at P.O. Box 2617 Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

Heamasi Ta'ufu'ou

United States

Anchorage, Alaska

For the first time in the history of the United Church of God, Anchorage is being sponsored as a one-year "specialty site." Although current registration is over 600 people, applications are still being accepted for approval. Due to limited space, this is not an open-to-all site. See special instructions below for applying to this Feast site.

The Sheraton Anchorage Hotel will host services and the bulk of housing

accommodations. The 16-story hotel features comfortable guest rooms with museum-quality sculpture and artwork. It has earned an international reputation for dining excellence and friendly service. The impressive atrium lobby features a jade staircase and a Native Alaskan design motif. Although the Sheraton is at hotel room capacity, another nice overflow hotel will be provided.

Anchorage offers the convenience, excitement and ambience of a small but cosmopolitan city nestled into the upper reaches of historic Cook Inlet. Recreational and cultural activities coexist within walking distance of each other year-round. Wildlife viewing, fishing, hiking, biking and cross-country ski trails are minutes from downtown.

Anchorage is a jumping-off point for a myriad of wilderness and outdoor adventures, including some of the world's most pristine and famous wildlife areas: Denali National Park, Kenai Fjords National Park, Prince William Sound, Katmai National Park, the Alaska Botanical Garden, Alyeska Resort, Big Game Alaska, the Alaska Zoo, Chugach National Forest and the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge.

At this time, Church-sponsored activities have not been finalized, but group activities will be arranged.

Location of Services: Sheraton Hotel Anchorage, 401 E. 6th Ave., Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: The room tax is 8 percent and there is no city sales tax.

Registration/Application: There is a \$125 per adult and \$50 per child (age 18 and under) nonrefundable application/approval fee. This will be applied to your hotel room bill. This will be returned only under two conditions: 1. If the capacity of the site is reached and no more approvals can be made. 2. If there is a cancellation and another party can fill your hotel space. Unexpected emergencies may result in the loss of monies. The Church suggests taking out travel insurance for protection.

A personal check, traveler's check or a money order made payable to the United Church of God are the only acceptable forms of payment for the application. Note "Alaska" on the memo line of your payment. A credit card number will be required upon notification of approval to hold your hotel room.

For further information write to USFestival@ucg.org or call (970) 484-5878.

Charles Melear

Bend-Redmond, Oregon

The Bend-Redmond area is pleased to host the Feast of Tabernacles again in 2004. Nestled in the pines of Central Oregon, Bend is the hub of the resort area in the Cascade Mountains. The beautiful scenery of snow-capped mountains, towering Ponderosa pines, sparkling lakes and mountain streams with spectacular waterfalls provides a millennial setting. Warm, sunny days and crisp, cool nights offer typical fall weather.

All types of housing are available from low-cost motel rooms (some with kitchenettes) to resort homes and condominiums with full kitchens, fireplaces and hot tubs near the meeting facility. Other scenic resort housing is available in Bend and Sunriver.

Central Oregon offers a wide range of family-oriented activities—far more than could possibly be crammed into eight days. The nationally acclaimed High Desert Museum features impressive indoor natural history exhibits and live animal programs in an outdoor setting. Newberry National Volcanic Monument offers views of interesting features of the area's volcanic past. Crater Lake is another well-known nearby scenic attraction.

Outdoor activities include hiking or biking your choice of miles of trails, horseback riding, hay rides, rock climbing, rockhounding, fishing, canoeing, boating and white-water rafting on the world-famous Deschutes River. Golfers will enjoy some of the nation's best courses with reasonable green fees. Other facilities include art galleries, nature centers, observatories and lava caves.

Bend has three shopping malls, including a factory outlet mall. The small tourist town of Sisters is a must for window-shopping and souvenirs. Sunriver Resort offers a full range of activities, shopping, dining and housing.

Feastgoers will enjoy a full range of dining choices. Special dining experiences include a dinner train, a chuckwagon restaurant featuring a live Western music show and a unique dining facility that offers a 24-ounce marinated steak dinner with all the trimmings for a price you won't believe in the rustic atmosphere of a former cowboy shack. This year a new Broadway-type musical dinner theater will present a special performance exclusively for us.

Location of Services: Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center, Middle Sister conference hall, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond (less than a mile from the Bend-Redmond airport).

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Larry J. Walker

Branson, Missouri

Branson will host the Feast of Tabernacles for the ninth consecutive year. Situated in the beautiful hardwood-forested hills of the Ozarks, Branson is a beautiful area for the Feast. It sits beside two lakes, and is surrounded by clear flowing springs in one of the most beautiful areas of the Midwest. Generally

during the Feast the fall colors of the forests are reaching their peak.

The area has something for almost everyone. It has plenty of first-class accommodations as well as an abundance of things to do. If you want to just sit back and enjoy the beauty of God's creation, the area is great. If you are more energetic and want to shop the outlet malls, go to some of the more than 60 live music shows, play golf on one of the six golf courses, take the kids to the lake or one of several amusement areas or simply "get lost" on the miles of hiking trails, you'll find it at Branson. Branson has been one of the favorite "transfer" sites over the year, so you can visit with many brethren from around the country and the world.

Accommodations range from kitchenettes to first-class hotels, most of which include a deluxe continental breakfast. If you prefer more space, you can enjoy a beautiful condominium overlooking the hills and lakes. Prices are all reasonable. Weather during the Feast is usually mild, with normal lows in the 50s and highs in the 70s or low 80s. Services will be held in a beautiful modern theater with plush theater seating for 1,600. We do have an allergy-free room for those who need it.

Location of Services: Baldknobbers Theater, 76 Country Blvd., Branson, Missouri.

First Service: Thursday, Sept. 30, at 10 a.m.

Taxes: Vary from 6 to 12 percent.

Michael Blackwell

Escondido (San Diego North), California

For the seventh consecutive year, the San Diego area will host the 2004 Feast at the California Center for the Arts in Escondido, California, a beautiful fixed-seat concert auditorium with an adjoining museum and park.

Escondido is a northern suburb of San Diego, about 30 minutes north of downtown and the Lindbergh International Airport. The airports in Ontario and Orange County are about one to one and a half hours away.

The Escondido area offers less traffic congestion than the busier downtown areas of San Diego. North San Diego County also offers a variety of housing options from homes and condos on the beach to economy properties near the meeting facility.

Available optional activities in the San Diego area include the world-famous San Diego Zoo, the Wild Animal Park, Sea World and Lego Land in nearby Carlsbad.

We will host a number of special activities for all age groups, including a Family Day, teen activities, young adult activities, seniors' lunch and a special dinner-concert. We are expecting about 1,200 to attend. Average temperatures range from highs in the 80s to lows in the 60s.

Location of Services: California Center for the Arts Escondido, 340 North Escondido Blvd., Escondido, California.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: 10 percent room tax and 8 percent sales tax.

Robin Webber

Hagerstown, Maryland

Situated in the Cumberland Valley and ringed by the Appalachian Mountains to the west and the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east, Hagerstown and surrounding Washington County offer many family, recreational and cultural activities.

Hagerstown is equidistant (70 miles) from Washington, D.C.; Baltimore, Maryland; and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and less than an hour from Gettysburg. This proximity provides the opportunity to participate in a variety of educational field trips and enjoyable excursions to these metropolitan areas, some of which will be organized by the Church.

Hagerstown has a major mall as well as the largest outlet mall in Maryland. Attractions in the area include a nationally renowned city park, a museum of fine arts and five state parks, including the Civil War battlefield at Antietam Creek. Sporting attractions include five area golf courses, ice rinks in an ice and sports complex, biking trails and river rafting.

Traveling the Western Maryland Rail Trail, residents and visitors can experience the beauty of Washington County's rolling farmland and abundant wildlife. People commonly enjoy hiking, biking, jogging and skating along the 10-mile trail.

The Clarion Hotel & Conference Center Antietam Creek will host services and likely provide the bulk of housing. The Clarion features an on-site restaurant, indoor pool/atrium area, fitness center (free for hotel guests) and an indoor track. Check out their Web site at www.clarionantietam.com.

Major airports nearby are Baltimore's BWI, Washington's Dulles and Ronald Reagan National and even Harrisburg International Airport.

Expected attendance will be around 800. For more information on the Hagerstown area, go to their Web site at www.marylandmemories.org.

Location of Services: Clarion Hotel & Conference Center Antietam Creek, 901 Dual Hwy., Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: There is a 10 percent room tax and 5 percent sales tax.

Dave Myers

Jekyll Island, Georgia

Located in the Atlantic Ocean, just off the southern coast of Georgia, Jekyll Island was once an exclusive resort area for American millionaires in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The state of Georgia now owns the island and has opened it to everyone. Visitors come from around the world to enjoy the peaceful environment offering beautiful beaches, hiking, fishing (requires a license), golfing, tennis and wildlife viewing (65 percent of the island is a nature preserve). A tour of Millionaires' Village is one of the highlight attractions. Horseback riding is available on Jekyll Island and nearby St. Simons Island.

For more information on this world-renowned location, go to the Web site: www.jekyllisland.com/index2.phtml.

Temperatures range from 60 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit (16 to 24 degrees

Anchorage, Alaska, Feast 2004 Application

First Name _____ Last Name _____
 Street Address _____
 City _____ State/Province _____ Zip/Postal Code _____
 Phone Number _____
 E-mail Address _____

Total # of adults times \$125 \$ _____
 Total # of children age 18 and under times \$50 \$ _____
 Total Application/Approval Fee (nonrefundable to those accepted; will be applied to your hotel bill) \$ _____

Room Type Request: King _____ Double (two beds) _____

Mail with check made out to the United Church of God to:

Anchorage Feast 2004, 631 S. Loomis Ave., Fort Collins, CO 80521

Celsius), with the possibility of rain. Major airports for arrival and departure are Savannah, Georgia; Brunswick, Georgia; and Jacksonville, Florida. A rental car is advised. There is a \$3 toll per vehicle every time one enters the island; one-week passes may also be purchased.

Expected attendance is 1,100.

Location of Services: Hartley Auditorium, 1 Beachview Dr., Jekyll Island, Georgia.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: Local tax is 5 percent; state tax is 6 percent.

David Treybig

Kerrville, Texas

Our first year in Kerrville was a tremendous success. This year promises to be equally rewarding.

Kerrville offers a wonderful taste of the Texas hill country, where sparkling spring-fed creeks meander through the rugged terrain and rolling hills of the Guadalupe River Valley. The accommodations are first-rate, the scenery is bucolic and the people are friendly.

We have reserved the Inn of the Hills Conference Resort (www.innofthehills.com). Having exclusive use of the conference resort will give us unlimited opportunities for intimate fellowship and activities. Most of the additional housing is available within three miles of the Festival site. With most of our members staying on site or within a short drive, and our exclusive use of the meeting rooms, we plan to offer special venues for teens, singles, young adults and senior citizens. This intimate setting will also afford the opportunity for select seminars that will enhance the keeping of the Feast. Services will be a short stroll to the newly completed 1,100-seat ballroom.

We plan to offer bus tours to nearby San Antonio, enabling our brethren to visit the famous River Walk, River Walk Mall, the Alamo and other popular sites. We hope to offer special tours of some of the 16 wineries that are located within an hour of the resort. Historic Fredericksburg, with its German heritage and over 150 shops and boutiques, is only a few miles away.

Kerrville's riverfront location lends itself to a variety of water-oriented recreational activities, such as canoeing, kayaking, tubing, fishing, swimming or waterside family picnicking. Numerous antique shops, contemporary art galleries and boutiques as well as two challenging golf courses add to Kerrville's appeal.

The resort has a beautiful courtyard with pool and spa. Its on-site restaurant, the Alpine Lodge, has seating for 160 with the Inn Pub open nightly offering live entertainment.

Complimentary membership to the Family Sports Center located just across the street is available to those staying at the resort. This facility has an indoor pool; lap pool; basketball, racquetball and volleyball courts; weightlifting center; sauna; a 16-lane bowling alley; and other amenities. There is a six-screen public movie theater adjacent to the resort.

With all of its out-of-the-way charm, Kerrville is only one hour from beauti-

ful San Antonio on one of the state's most scenic drives. It is only one and a half hours from Austin and four hours from the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. The elevation is 1,645 feet with a mild climate and weather averaging a high of 80 and low of 52.

Make plans now to experience God's Feast in the Texas hill country!

Location of Services: Inn of the Hills, 1001 Junction Hwy., Kerrville, Texas.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: Room tax is 12 percent; local sales tax is 8.25 percent.

Britton M. Taylor

Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii

Beautiful Lahaina, Maui, will again host the Feast this year. Record crowds came last year and according to their evaluations, they were not disappointed. Lahaina provides an ideal setting for people of all ages. Services will again be provided at the Maui Theatre, a modern, air-conditioned auditorium, seating close to 700 people.

There will be plenty of activities available for young and old. Among these are a traditional luau by the oceanfront, a children's party, a senior's luncheon, singles' and teens' hospitality get-togethers, a family dance and snorkeling. Tourist attractions include dinner cruises, deep-sea fishing, dozens of shops and numerous restaurants a block away from the meeting place, a large aquarium facility, golf, surfing and helicopter rides around the island.

The island of Maui is located about 80 miles south of Honolulu, Oahu, the capital of Hawaii. There are numerous direct flights to Maui from the U.S. mainland. Check with your travel agent or go online. Daily temperatures should be in the 80s Fahrenheit (26 to 31 Celsius).

Location of Services: Maui Theatre, 878 Front St., Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii.

First Service: Thursday, Sept. 30, at 10 a.m.

Taxes: 11.5 percent.

Mario Seiglie

Lexington, Kentucky

Lexington, Kentucky, is in the heart of the Bluegrass State. When most people think of Lexington, they think of two things—horses and basketball. Although the locals are proud of both, there certainly is much more to offer in the Lexington area. With the University of Kentucky in Lexington, it has a strong college flavor that brings with it many amenities ranging from wonderful and numerous restaurants to small quaint shops, many parks to walk in and easy access to a variety of sight-seeing favorites.

One of the more popular tourist destinations during the Feast in Lexington is the world-famous Kentucky Horse Park, training, breeding and burial site of many famous thoroughbred horses. It is also the location of several shows pertaining to horses. In Harrodsburg (within a short distance) is "Shaker Town," home of the Shakers, where you can shop and eat in a most unique setting. And Lexington has mall shopping for those who just can't live without one trip to the mall during the week.

There will be several opportunities for tours and trips together throughout the Feast, and Lexington additionally boasts some very nice facilities in which to hold family and teen activities. It truly is a beautiful part of the country. Lexington will also be serving this year as one of two designated sites for singles to gather (please see write-up on page 5).

Although Lexington is not a site that offers much in the way of condominiums, there will be several facilities featuring kitchenettes.

Location of Services: Heritage Hall East, a part of Lexington Center, attached to Rupp Arena at 430 West Vine Street in Lexington. It is on the ground floor, so there are no steps where we are meeting. There will be some housing available attached to the facility that is handicapped accessible.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: The hotel/motel tax rate is 12.36 percent.

Mark Winner

Panama City Beach, Florida

The Edgewater Beach Resort along the coastline of Panama City Beach will again host the Feast of Tabernacles in Florida for 2004.

Edgewater's 110-acre gated community incorporates an array of activities and amenities sure to make a successful Feast with 11 swimming pools, 12 tennis courts, 11 shuffleboard courts, four hot tubs, a tanning salon, gift shop, game arcade and one full-service restaurant.

A complimentary tram service is available for transportation across the resort and to the meeting facility if needed. Part of the resort rests along the coastline. Step back a few yards from the ocean, and you'll find yourself on the deck surrounding Edgewater's famous Lagoon Pool. Landscaped islands and several flowing waterfalls find their way into this 11,000-square-foot Polynesian-style, free-form pool, while several whirlpools and reflecting ponds make this tropical area complete.

The other part of the resort, across the street connected by a 10-foot wide pedestrian walkway, houses the meeting facility and a cluster of luxurious golf villas; a nine-hole, par-three executive golf course with nine lakes and several island greens; a complete clubhouse and pro shop; 12 Plexicushion tennis courts with six lighted for night play; and also shuffleboard courts.

Edgewater's health club is a 1,500-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility that features everything from cardiovascular exercise equipment to an aerobics salon to a massage therapy room.

Housing: Approximately 70 percent of the units are oceanfront, which includes studios, one-, two- and three-bedroom condominiums. The remaining condos surround the meeting facility and golf course. Prices per night throughout Edgewater Resort will range from: studios, at \$77; one bedroom, \$92 to \$118; two bedrooms, \$102 to \$141; and three bedrooms, \$122 to \$185. Long Beach Resort, a mile away and a part of Edgewater Resort, provides studios at \$70; one bedroom at \$98; two bedrooms at \$124; and three bedrooms at \$151. Additional housing accommodations will also be available nearby, some

oceanfront. These properties will range from \$28 to \$65 per night. Some of these properties offer efficiencies, and some have full kitchens.

The long-term success of this site depends on members only using the housing listed in our housing brochure. The low price for the meeting facility saves the Church thousands of dollars each year and Edgewater Resort trusts the cooperation of our members to use the housing listed in our brochure. Some condos in the area may be less expensive, but the rates at Edgewater are comparable and of dependable quality.

For more information, check out www.edgewaterbeachresort.com.

Location of Services: Edgewater Beach Resort, 11212 Front Beach Rd., Panama City Beach, Florida.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: 11.1 percent.

Harold Rhodes

Steamboat Springs, Colorado

We're pleased to be returning to this site in north-central Colorado at the head of the Yampa River Valley. The elevation of just 6,710 feet has proven to be a real plus. Though lower in elevation the location is in a scenic and beautiful mountain area of a little different type than previous Colorado sites. This year we have an excellent chance of seeing the peak of fall aspen colors.

One of the most attractive features of this Feast site is having the meeting facility and the majority of housing under one roof. Steamboat Grand Resort Hotel has been awarded a AAA four-diamond award for 2004. Accommodations are mostly condominium-style and range from parlors to very spacious three-bedroom units. Rates remain at last year's prices (starting at \$79). Three-bedroom units will be in short supply, but a two-bedroom unit will sleep as many as a lot of three-bedroom condos. Tax and resort fees are 15 percent. For a "virtual tour," check www.steamboatgrand.com.

Nearby housing, including some moderately priced properties, will also be listed in the housing planner. There are ample fine restaurants, many of them rated in both Mobil Guide and AAA. Many of the types of mountain activities available at previous Colorado sites are also available, including mountain biking, hiking, fishing, helicopter rides and horseback riding.

The town of Steamboat Springs has a distinct Western atmosphere. Its name derives from early settlers who thought a geyser at a hot spring on the river sounded like the intermittent puffing of a steamboat.

There are several hot springs in the area, the most prominent being at the Steamboat Springs Health and Recreation Center. This has an array of features, including mineral pools, saunas and a waterslide. There are 150 mineral springs in the vicinity, and seven can be visited on a 2-mile walking tour. Other attractions include Fish Creek Falls, museums, art galleries, Stagecoach Reservoir and Steamboat Lake.

In order to provide variety, there are plans to modify the Family Day this year. Check the *U.S. and Canadian Festival Site Activity Brochure* that will be

printed in July for more information.

To reach Steamboat Springs, take Highway 9 north from Silverthorne, which is on I-70. At Kremmling, turn left on U.S. 40. This will take you over Rabbit Ears Pass and down into the town. It is 90 miles from Silverthorne. From Denver allow at least three hours. Commercial airlines serve the airport about 20 miles out of town.

Location of Services: Priest Creek Ballroom, Steamboat Grand Resort Hotel, 2300 Mt. Werner Circle. Coming into town from the south on Highway 40 turn right onto Mt. Werner Road, then left on Mt. Werner Circle.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: General sales tax is 8.4 percent. For the Steamboat Grand Resort Hotel, taxes and resort fees are 16 percent. The other lodging properties vary, but are mostly lower than the Grand.

Larry Neff

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

Spectacular autumn colors, unique sandstone formations, enormous indoor water parks, go-cart racing, hiking, riding the famous amphibious "Ducks"—all this and more is what makes the Wisconsin Dells a great Festival site for the entire family.

Services will be held at the beautiful Crystal Grand Music Theater. This modern facility seats more than 1,900 people and is ideal for lingering conversations and fellowship. Parking is conveniently located next to the facility.

Additional housing facilities have been added for 2004. These include large homes located near the Feast site plus two additional spacious condominium facilities that are available for those needing extra room. The Dells offers a large variety of housing including ultra-modern theme resorts with elaborate indoor water parks. There are also homes, cottages and condominiums for rent on lakes, rivers, golf courses or in the woods. Traditional style motels offer an exceptional value. Several facilities offer large indoor water parks and whirlpool suites, so ask about them when making reservations. All establishments require a housing deposit and cancellation policies vary, so ask about them when making reservations.

Wisconsin Dells is a unique site in its family atmosphere and accessibility. Most accommodations are within a few minutes' drive of the Crystal Grand Music Theater as well as many attractions and quaint shops.

The Madison, Wisconsin, airport is an hour away from the Dells, the Milwaukee airport is two hours away and Chicago's O'Hare airport is a three-hour drive. The weather at Wisconsin Dells can vary from beautiful autumn weather to crisper temperatures.

Additional information can be found on the Web at www.ucg-beloit/dells. Expected attendance is 1,200.

Location of Services: Crystal Grand Music Theater, Rt. 23 (one-half mile east of I-90), Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.

First Service: Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Taxes: Local tax is 5.5 percent; hotel tax is 11 percent.

Steve Nutzman



From the Word

Coming Boldly Before the Throne of God

by David Baker

We live in a world where relationships are important. Many individuals put great value on their relationships with those in powerful positions. In fact some are willing to pay considerable sums of money in order to have access to the “movers and shakers” of society. How much would someone pay for access to the most powerful being in the universe?

God has granted members of His Church the tremendous privilege of developing a close, intimate relationship with Him. In fact we are called His children (Romans 8:14-16), which implies a close, loving relationship. God gives us the privilege of appearing before His throne any time we choose.

We are given a glimpse of that throne in Revelation 4:2-11. John describes a vision he was given of God’s glorious throne and the honor and glory the four

living creatures and 24 elders give Him.

And yet we are encouraged to “come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). Our prayers are described as incense before God’s throne (Revelation 5:8). We didn’t have to pay for this privilege—God granted us access through grace.

Who Does God Hear?

We also live in societies where many people pray to God on a regular basis. For example, according to a survey conducted by Barna Research in 2001, 82 percent of adults surveyed indicated that they pray during a typical week. But does God listen to any and every prayer? King David stated in Psalm 66:18, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.” God inspired Isaiah to record, “When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you

make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood” (Isaiah 1:15). These are just two verses that indicate God does not listen to every prayer offered to Him.

How do we know that God hears us? Certain conditions have to be met. As we have just seen, God does not listen to those who live their lives in rebellion to Him (Isaiah 59:1-2). Therefore one condition of answered prayer is obedience. The apostle John was inspired to write, “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John 3:22).

Believing Prayers

Another condition to answered prayer is faith. We must pray to God in faith in order to please Him. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is,

and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

As we communicate with our Creator, we must do so through faith and sincerity. God does not answer faithless prayers (James 1:5-7). Christ instructed His disciples, “Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them” (Mark 11:24).

When we pray, we are instructed to ask in Christ’s name. As we make our requests to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ, we are recognizing Christ’s authority as our High Priest. Christ instructed His disciples, “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13).

Making our requests in the name of Jesus Christ implies that our prayers are in harmony with Christ’s will. We have the responsibility to continually study God’s Word in order to understand His

will. Once we understand God’s will, we can make our requests with great confidence. The apostle John wrote, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him” (1 John 5:14-15).

As we strive to be obedient, seeking God in faith, we can approach our Heavenly Father through the office of our High Priest, Jesus Christ. We can ask anything according to God’s will, knowing with confidence that He hears us and will grant our requests. This is the most valuable relationship that I can imagine! Let’s continue to develop and strengthen that relationship by walking and talking with God on a daily basis. **UM**

This article previously appeared in the December 2003 United News Philippines (www.uicg.org/iph/imp.htm).

Treasure Digest

We Can Overcome!

Even after years in the Church, does it seem some sin still “easily ensnares” us (Hebrews 12:1)? After fighting some sudden temptation or wrestling with some deep-seated habit, do we find ourselves failing to overcome?

But God has called us to be overcomers (Revelation 3:5, 12, 21). Rooting out sin and growing in grace and knowledge are necessary in preparing to serve with Christ in His Kingdom.

Of course we can’t overcome—become righteous—on our own. It takes God’s love—through His Spirit—to fulfill the law (Romans 5:5; 13:10). The righteousness of God comes by faith (Philippians 3:9)—Christ’s faith, not something we can work up, but a gift we can ask for in earnest prayer.

Though we can’t do it all ourselves, we must do our part. We must submit to God, draw near to Him and resist the devil (James 4:7-8).

“The key to it all is ‘be vigilant’ [1 Peter 5:6-9]. Be on your guard! Be ever watchful! Be prepared! That’s where we fall down!” wrote Herbert W. Armstrong in “How to Be an Overcomer.”

Too often when temptation comes, we are too far from God. Mr. Armstrong, whose faithful ministry spanned more than 50 years, compared it to being out of (spiritual) training but still trying to box against the world’s heavyweight champion. Against Satan we can never win without being close to God in order to receive His immediate help.

“When the temptations suddenly assail you, no matter how hard you then try, or cry out to God for help, you are simply *too far away from Him* to get help!” Mr. Armstrong wrote.

Praying without ceasing, keeping close to God and thus being filled with His Spirit and faith are the keys. Seeking first the Kingdom of God and keeping our minds on things above are also elements (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:1-10).

“Sometimes it takes a siege of *fasting and prayer*—earnest, *determined, persevering prayer*—seeking God with all our might—with weeping—staying with it, *determined*, until we get through,” Mr. Armstrong wrote.

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne,” Christ said. Isn’t it worth it?

Things to Think About When Deleavening

Removing leaven is a physical symbol of the spiritual process of removing sin. Yeast, like sin, multiplies rapidly and spreads like a contagion. Here are some points to consider:

- Purge out malice and wickedness (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). These are general terms for evil, the opposite of God’s will. “This is leaven that sours the mind to a great degree,” wrote Matthew Henry in his commentary on these verses.

- Watch out for the leaven of hypocrisy (Luke 12:1). Some crumbs are well hidden from others (and even from ourselves), but to God there is nothing “hidden that will not be known” (Luke 12:2). David asked God to “cleanse me from secret faults” (Psalm 19:12).

- Paul warned of the attitudes that would be widespread in the last days (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Are any “crumbs” of self-love, pride, unthankfulness, etc., lurking in our “home”? Galatians 5:19-21 also lists the works of the flesh, the attitudes and actions we too easily become infected with.

- Replace these things with the spiritual unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:8). Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit.

Mardi Gras and Lent: How Not to Deal With Sin

The popular notion of how to deal with the bad things we do (sin) is reflected in the way many people observe Mardi Gras and Lent. Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday in French, called Pancake Tuesday in England) “is a lively, colorful [not to mention bawdy

and debased] celebration held on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent begins,” says the *World Book Encyclopedia*. It “goes back to an ancient Roman custom of merrymaking before a period of fast.” The idea seems to be to get as much revelry and additional sin out of the way before you decide to do anything about it. But that doesn’t show that you think sin is really wrong!

Then comes Lent, a time of “fasting, prayer and self-sacrifice” and “penance.” It’s not bad to fast and pray, and self-sacrifice is good all year. But it seems the purpose is “penance,” not repentance.

Penance is “compensation for an offense” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*), but we can’t pay for our sins—only Christ can.

God wants us to repent. “When we repent we must turn away from the sins we are guilty of committing, and we must unconditionally surrender our will to God” (*Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*, page 17). It’s a change in our way of thinking in response to seeing what’s so bad about sin and what’s so good about God’s laws. It’s being grateful for the awesome sacrifice that paid for our sins.

Be Ready to Give an Answer: Why Don’t You Believe in Good Friday or Easter Sunday?

Jesus offered both the fact and the details of His resurrection as the only divine sign to His generation that He was “greater than Jonah” and “greater than Solomon” and that His message should lead its hearers to repentance (Matthew 12:39-42). He said that He would be three days and three nights—a period of 72 hours (John 11:9-10; Genesis 1:5)—in the heart of the earth (the grave), just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish (Jonah 1:17). Elsewhere, He said that He would “be killed, and after three days rise again” (Mark 8:31).

The problem with the commonly accepted belief regarding the crucifixion and resurrection is that there are not three days and three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. We believe the weight of scriptural and historical evidence leads to the conclusion that Jesus died on Wednesday afternoon, was hurriedly placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea shortly before sunset that same afternoon (the eve of an annual Sabbath, the first day of Unleavened Bread; John 19:30-31, 42; Mark 15:42-46) and was resurrected by the Father shortly before sunset on Saturday, three days and three nights after being placed in the tomb, exactly as He had said.

This explanation is consistent with the details found in Scripture. It does not require a strained fitting of three days and three nights between Friday evening and Sunday by speculating about parts of days and nights. It reconciles the accounts of the women and the spices, found in Mark 16:1 and Luke 23:56. In the first account, the faithful women obediently rested during holy time and afterward procured the spices. In the second account, the women prepared the spices and afterward rested during holy time. These accounts are reconciled by understanding that there were two periods of holy time during the week in question. Jesus was crucified on the Passover (Matthew 26:18-20; 1 Corinthians 5:7), which was the preparation day (Mark 15:42) for the first annual Holy Day on the Jewish calendar, the first day of Unleavened Bread. The women waited until this day was over, then bought and prepared the spices, then rested again on God’s weekly Sabbath day, and then proceeded to the tomb to apply the spices to Jesus’ body early on Sunday morning.

They visited the tomb after the holy Sabbaths (plural) of that week (as the original Greek of Matthew 28:1 should be translated). The annual Sabbath (annual Holy Days also are called “Sabbaths” [Leviticus 16:31; 23:24]) was Thursday, and the weekly Sabbath was Saturday. When they arrived at the tomb early Sunday morning, they found it empty and heard the announcement from the angel that Jesus was alive and was not there (Mark 16:6). (From *Fundamental Beliefs*, pages 17-18).

For More Information: *Fundamental Beliefs, Holidays and Holy Days.*

Warning Signs

■ The signs are everywhere, and we see them so often it can be easy to ignore them. In the back of our minds we think, It can't happen to me. But it can!

by Les McCullough

Slippery When Wet. Dangerous Curve. Watch Your Step. Bridge Ices Before Roadway.

These are warning signs we see almost daily in our lives. In fact we see them so often that the tendency is to ignore them. They are there for a reason, but how well do we heed them? How often do we heed them? They declare very real dangers to our well-being, but for the most part, we tend to ignore or overlook their advice.

Is that your practice? We frequently read in the paper or see on TV where someone has ignored a warning sign and paid a dear price. The pictures show automobiles torn in half by an accident with ambulances standing by. All because someone was driving too fast, was intoxicated or didn't see the ice.

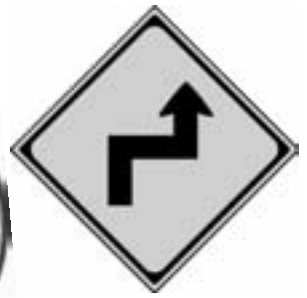
Our habits are so strong they lead us to ignore good advice. In London, the crosswalks have large, painted signs at the curb which caution "Look Left"

because in most nations of the world the traffic moves the opposite of what it does in Britain. The traffic is traveling on the opposite side of the street for most people, and they just naturally look to their right before crossing. I have seen numerous tourists nearly step in front of oncoming traffic. They read the sign, but habit made them look the wrong way.

My wife and I lived just outside London for five years and had visited the city dozens of times before living there. Yet I have to remind myself to look left when in London. The traffic pattern is especially difficult for tourists driving in Britain when turning a corner or backing out in a parking lot. It's so natural to pull to the right side of road. The momentary lapse can have serious consequences.

Health Warnings

Medical groups have made a practice of posting warning signs for cancer or heart problems. Every package of cigarettes in the United States is legally required to carry a warning message. It is well established that smoking causes cancer, and yet millions of people contentedly puff away. The reasoning, if there is any, is that this is a low-tar cigarette or it is filtered. There is no sensible explanation for their actions other than "it can't happen to me." Health warnings about cholesterol or high



blood pressure abound, mostly to little avail.

Americans lead the world in obesity. The majority of Americans are at least a little overweight. A smaller but significant number are severely obese. It is also an established fact that being overweight leads to heart and circulatory problems, diabetes and other ailments. This problem is especially serious with young children. I recently saw a television program that featured a young boy around 3 years of age who weighed over 100 pounds. His mother couldn't pick him up.

How did he get this way? His mother fed him. Then she fed him again. He couldn't prepare his own food. The mother had to know what she was doing to her child, yet she couldn't say no to his demands. Unless dramatic steps are taken, this child can look forward to numerous health problems as he grows older. All the signs are there.

Sexually transmitted diseases are another tragic area ruining multiple thousands of young lives. In reality, there is no safe sex outside marriage. Unfortunately, it isn't always safe in marriage if one partner is not (or was not) faithful. Young people who ignore this advice place themselves and future generations in jeopardy. The number of sexually transmitted diseases is frightening.

Spiritual Warning Signs

As Christians, we need to be aware of warning signs in our spiritual lives. It is so easy to let down in our daily need to pray. It actually is a need. To ignore the need is dangerous. "I don't have time right now. I'll pray later," can so easily be the excuse. Often later never comes. I know of a man who used to

require of himself that he pray every morning. He also had an amount of time in prayer he required of himself. If he didn't meet those standards, he didn't allow himself to eat the next meal until the standard he had set for himself was met. That action, of course, necessitates the exercising of even more willpower.

The letting down could include ignoring Bible study, church attendance and a myriad of other things. We tend to ignore our habits of being short-tempered with others or of passing judgment without the facts. People allow themselves to overindulge in a favorite drink or to eat too much, and a little white lie is certainly no problem, is it?

All of these should be warning signs just as much as "Dangerous Curve." Don't just see the signs. Follow them and act upon them so you can have a safe and happy journey through life. **UN**

"A Fish Out of Time"

■ When a fish believed to be extinct for 65 million years was found in the Indian Ocean, evolutionists were stumped as to why it hadn't evolved at all in all those millions of years. The more we learn about this amazing fish, the more it casts doubt on the evolutionists' interpretation of the geologic record.

by Bill Jahns

In 1938 a fishing trawler off the coast of South Africa near East London made a discovery that astonished the scientific world. The trawler had caught a fish that was supposed to have been extinct for 65 million years—the coelacanth. This was the first time this fish was discovered in modern times. Previously, it was thought that coelacanths only existed until the end of the geologic period called Cretaceous.

The fish was examined and named *Latimeria chalumnae* by Professor J.L.B. Smith of South Africa. Coelacanths have been called "living fossils" because they have not changed, according to the geologists, over 400 million years.

Why are coelacanths such a puzzle to the scientific world? The answer is found in the way that geologists divide time by "geologic periods." According to modern geologic theory, life has evolved from very simple forms in ancient times to the more complex forms we find on earth today.

Coelacanth fossils are found during the geologic period called Cretaceous. The Cretaceous period ended around 65 million years ago (by evolutionary standards) and coelacanth is not found in any "younger" strata. During this same period dinosaurs also roamed the earth.

Not only does coelacanth disappear from the geologic record, but also it has not changed during this "geologic time." However, the environment has changed radically in the last 65 million years. If evolutionary processes had really happened, there should be no creatures in existence today identical to those from 65 million years ago. The evolutionary process surely would have acted on every creature during this period of time.

Thus, the coelacanth is a mystery to evolutionists. As one article states: "The rediscovery of the coelacanth in 1938 was the marine equivalent of stumbling across a living dinosaur. . . . The *Latimeria* remains an enigma. How has it survived 70 million years after all other coelacanths have become extinct?" (*Prime Club Magazine*, Vol. 6, No. 4, "Diving With Dinosaurs," pages 26-27.) Finding coelacanths is like finding

groups of small dinosaurs alive today in the jungles of Africa!

Not only have coelacanths been found alive, but in more than one location. "After their rediscovery, coelacanths were observed only in or around the Comoros, a small cluster of volcanic islands between southeastern Africa and Madagascar. As a result, it was believed that coelacanths inhabited only a limited range in the western Indian Ocean. In 1998 reports of another population more than 10,000 km (6,000 mi) to the east of the Comoros, shattered that long-held belief. First spotted near the eastern Indonesian island of Sulawesi, the newly discovered coelacanth population is the subject of intense scientific investigation" (*Encarta Encyclopedia*, 1997-2003, "Coelacanth").

Another problem for evolutionists is that coelacanths are more numerous and widespread than first believed. This adds further doubt to the validity of the evolutionists' "geologic periods." Now it is known that coelacanths have been sold in the markets of Indonesia for quite some time. Some scientists speculate that coelacanths may exist in other parts of the earth and have not yet been dis-



covered because they tend to live deep in the ocean where it is difficult to find them.

An Amazing Creation

Coelacanths are an amazing creation of God, as evidenced by their unusual way of searching for prey. "The coelacanth has often been seen to perform head-stands, in which it rotates its body into a vertical position, with its head near the bottom and its caudal fin curved perpendicular to its body. It holds this position for two to three minutes at a time. This curious behavior may be used to scan the bottom with its rostral organ, which is thought to be an electro-receptive organ that helps it to locate prey" ("Diving With Dinosaurs," page 27).

Here is a fish that has existed over 400 million years according to the "geologic column," yet it uses some type of advanced mechanism to find its prey. Where is the simple-to-complex



advance that is claimed by evolutionists to be demonstrated by the geologic record? This creature is very advanced and found in strata dated at 400 million years. We can see why the word *enigma* is so common when articles about coelacanth are written.

The mystery of why coelacanth was discovered only recently can be explained when it is understood where the coelacanth lives. It is impossible for them to live near the surface of the ocean because they cannot absorb oxygen in sufficient quantities. Their design enables them to live at a depth of around 800 meters (about 2,600 feet) below the surface of the water.

Another Interpretation of the Geologic Record

What if there was another interpretation of the geologic record? If the geologic record is not the record of "evolu-

tion" slowly over millions of years, but is the record of a series of catastrophes, then trilobites and fish that live deep in the ocean would tend to be buried lower than fish or other creatures who lived on land or near the surface of the water. Because coelacanths live at great depths, their fossils would tend to be buried deeper in the strata of the earth. This is very likely the true explanation of why coelacanths are not found in "modern" geologic strata.

My wife, Cheryl, and I had the opportunity to visit a museum in East London, South Africa, last year that gives the

entire story of how coelacanth was found and identified. On display is the first coelacanth caught, a model of the vessel from which the fishermen caught it and other relevant items. It is a modern mystery for scientists to explain, as coelacanth represents strong evidence for creation. It has not changed for over 400 million years, according to their theory, and is missing from geologic strata for the last 65 million years.

Misconceptions

Before coelacanth was discovered, scientists had many misconceptions

about how it lived and what the functions of its fins were. Michael Denton states in his book, *Evolution: a Theory in Crisis*: "Further, there is always the possibility that groups, such as the mammal-like reptiles which have left no living representative, might have possessed features in their soft biology completely different from any known reptile or mammal which would eliminate them completely as potential mammalian ancestors, just as the discovery of the living coelacanth revealed features in its soft anatomy which were unexpected and cast doubt on the ances-

tral status of its rhipidistian relatives" (1985, page 182).

In other words, because scientists only had fossils of coelacanth to work with, they misinterpreted how the coelacanth functioned and how its internal organs work. The theory that it walked on the bottom of the ocean was completely erroneous. In reality it assumes a vertical position when it is seeking prey. They had no idea of the modern theory that coelacanth had an "electro-receptive" sensing organ that it used to catch prey.

Coelacanth is indeed an incredible

wonder of creation! Truly, it supports the apostle Paul's statement in Romans 1:20: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

Coelacanth survived through the ages because it was designed by God with very complex organs, which enable it to survive and flourish off the coast of Africa and other areas of the earth. **UM**

This article previously appeared in the Fall 2003 Ministerial Quarterly.

Christ in Us: The Hope of Glory!

■ In the Christian world, many trust that Jesus will save them if they accept Him and do the best they can in this life. But is that what the Bible teaches? There is a great mystery about salvation, which few understand.

by Jack R. Elliott

In Colossians 1:26-27 we read, "The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery [including] the Gentiles: which is *Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (emphasis added throughout).

What is meant by "Christ in us," and why do people not understand?

Jesus explained this to His disciples when they asked Him, "Why do you speak to [the people] in parables?"

"He answered and said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him'" (Matthew 13:10-12).

Have what? The Spirit of God in them—a spirit of power, understanding, trustful obedience, love and godly character (Ephesians 1:13).

Jesus went on to explain, "Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive. For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them'" (Matthew 13:13-15).

What would be wrong with that? Wouldn't it be good for their minds to be healed? The answer lies in the fact that *they are not ready*. They have not

been called and they have not been given the Holy Spirit that makes salvation possible. Salvation is now open only to those that the Father calls out of this world, just as He did the patriarchs and the disciples. When He does so, He adds these to the *Body of Christ*. That Body or Church is led by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus explains, "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God' [Isaiah 54:13; see also Jeremiah 31:34 and the introduction of the New Covenant]. Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life" (John 6:45-47).

Those who believe in Him also obey His word as it is written in the Holy Bible. Quoting Jesus: "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death" (John 8:51). He said also, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

Jesus said, "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great" (Luke 6:47-49).

The Passover: Welcoming Christ Into Our Lives

When we take the Passover recognizing Christ's sacrifice, the bread and wine not only symbolize forgiveness of sins, they picture Christ entering into our lives.

Jesus said, "Take eat, this is My body." This physical act symbolizes a *spiritual happening*. When we take these they are digested and literally become part of our physical body, as He becomes part of us spiritually when we continually obey Him and do His will in all areas of our lives.

But Jesus is speaking spiritually, so this symbolizes His uniting with us spiritually. When we eat the bread and the wine at Passover, with conviction, in the

manner that Christ instructs, He becomes part of us. Symbolically, as we ingest the bread and wine, we welcome Christ into our lives to be part of us (Revelation 3:20). Once there, through the power of His Holy Spirit, He guides us with understanding in a way that we cannot follow on our own. This is "Christ in us: the hope of glory."

The *glory* spoken of in Colossians 1:27 at the beginning of this article is God's glory shared with those who become sons of God in the family of God. It is an eternal, spirit Kingdom. All of its inhabitants will be holy spiritual beings and members of the God family. They will be without sin.

God the Father will be the head; and Christ, His oldest and greatest Son, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, will be its administrator—just as He has always been since the creation of mankind. The Scriptures make this clear:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. . . .

"That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1-5, 9-14).

Those called today as firstfruits, who become glorified at Christ's second coming, will rule with Jesus Christ for a thousand years and help teach, guide and comfort those living then while they are being taught, trained and proven (Revelation 20:6).

The "*hope of glory*" represents the desire to become the sons of God who inherit riches and blessings jointly with Jesus Christ from our Heavenly Father, who shares all His riches and blessings with His sons. All will be living within

the royal family of God for eternity. This is clearly outlined in the book of Romans:

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit [itself] bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and *joint heirs* with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be *glorified together*" (Romans 8:14-17). At this time, while still in the flesh, we are only heirs. In the resurrection they will be born again as spirit beings—holy, righteous sons of God.

Threefold Plan

God's plan is threefold: First, He created mankind in His own image, including intelligence and abilities far above any of His other physical creation.

Secondly, He creates within these physical beings who are made like God a spiritual, righteous, trustworthy, loving character like His own. As free moral agents, we all have the choice of living God's way or doing our own thing according to our own desires and understanding. One way leads to eternal life and God's glory. The other leads only to being left out of God's plan and ultimately eternal death (Deuteronomy 30:15-19).

The third step is glorification as sons of God—the purpose for which we were created. Our loving and outgoing Father is increasing the numbers and joys of having a large, harmonious family. This is the *great mystery* that Christ came to preach to all who can hear (Mark 1:14-15). God is building His family (Hebrews 2:10)!

Those who have died without understanding these things will come up in a resurrection often called the White Throne Judgment. There, before God, they will have their first chance to know God. This is the second resurrection when the dead are raised—those who never really knew Jesus the Christ or understood His message. They will come to understand and will have plenty of time to prove their faithfulness to God in that time of judgment.

Like everyone before them, they will be given the chance to prove their allegiance to God. They will be judged by the same guidelines, process and

laws that the firstfruits were. This process is briefly outlined in Revelation 20:12-15:

"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades [the grave] delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

Found in the Book of Life

These books that we are all judged by are the books of the Holy Bible—the Word of God. Those who believe Jesus obey His word. Furthermore, God keeps a symbolic book of record—the Book of Life—including each one whom He calls. If our name is not blotted out because of rebellion against Him, it remains and we will live forever as sons of God.

Our Father is a fair, faithful, loving God. It is His will that none perish (2 Peter 3:9), but He does not compromise with sin and evil (Psalm 5:4).

Jesus gives us the conclusion of it all: "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:48-51).

The Father calls each one of us in His own time. No one will be left out of the process. Those who come to believe in Jesus Christ to the full extent of trust and obedience will become the sons of the Father and brothers of Jesus Christ and live in the family of God for eternity. When Jesus' word and spirit come into our hearts and minds, we are on our way to living by it and proving that we will be loving and loyal children forever.

Thus, the mystery is revealed—it is Christ, living and working God's will within us, preparing us to be in God's family. This is our hope of glory. **UM**

To Know Christ and Him Crucified

■ "Knowing Christ and Him crucified" may well be an overworked phrase within traditional mainstream Christianity. But this phrase is indeed from the Bible and, therefore, we should not close our ears to it. More than that, the principle involved is central to overcoming sin.

by Greg Sargent

Aaron Burr was furious! Alexander Hamilton had again thwarted his efforts. Not only had Alex, as Burr called him, convinced the Federalists to cast their tie-breaking votes for Thomas Jefferson instead of Burr for president of the United States, but now Alex had undermined Burr's run for governor of New York.

Enough was enough! Burr was ruined both politically and economically. If he had gained political clout, the massive loans given him over the years could easily have been wiped out. No longer. Thus, revenge must be exacted!

And so it was on a summer day next to the Hudson River on the Jersey side, that Aaron Burr's nine-inch brass-barreled smoothbore pistol projected a lethal .544-caliber ball through Hamilton's liver, causing death by bleeding by 2 p.m. the following day.

This story is infamous in U.S. history. Many have read or heard about the duel. However, most people would not recognize in themselves an inability to stop similar dastardly actions as reflecting traits of Aaron Burr himself. He was full of hatred, anger, bitterness, resentment and revenge.

But his nature and resulting actions are not unique. There is a similar pattern

of evil throughout the entire human race, throughout all time.

All mankind, the sons of disobedience, are guilty of "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like" (Ephesians 2:2; see also verses 1, 3; Galatians 5:19-21).

Christ's Example

Why couldn't Burr rise above his pain? Why does the world revel in earthly desires and fleshly ambitions? Because Aaron Burr and this world have never known Jesus Christ and Him crucified!

Such phraseology ("to know Christ and Him crucified") is not often used in our Church culture, because we don't "freeze-frame" Christ on the cross the way mainstream Christianity does. We preach His crucifixion and the hope of salvation it brings us, having paid for our sins. I want to focus on a different angle, for to know Christ and Him crucified is central to overcoming sin.

In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul wrote to the members about his stay with them. He said he did not come to them with "excellence of speech." Rather he was "determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (verse 2). Understanding this verse will, in fact, give us a crucial key to counteracting sin.

We know Christ was sent forth from God as the Word that became flesh. Appearing in the flesh, He humbled Himself "to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8). Knowledge about Jesus Christ that is greatly emphasized throughout the Bible, along with other major points, is that Christ was crucified. Yet, many were killed by crucifixion. What was so different about Christ "and Him crucified"?

A Different Reaction

Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus was tempted in all points "yet without sin." It would be one thing if He had lived in a cave all of His life and not sinned. "No big deal," we might say, significant as that would be. It's quite another story to realize that Christ, although crucified, never sinned.

I don't know about you, but I'm not a happy camper when I'm not feeling well. When a cold or ache or pain comes along, I don't want anyone around. Don't pamper me. Don't rub my feet. Just leave me alone! I'll suffer all by myself. Fighting irritation and impatience at that point is certainly not easy. And if I can't take pampering, I certainly would have a difficult time countering someone else's human nature!

The example we have of Jesus Christ includes when He was in His greatest struggle, His greatest pain. He lost sleep. He was beaten to the point of death. He was hurting everywhere. And then after carrying His own cross, nails were driven into His wrists and feet. It is at this point in His suffering that we are reminded, "When He was reviled, [He] did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten" (1 Peter 2:23).

What a sterling example under such conditions! During His crucifixion experience, Christ did not sin!

His Mind in Us

We are all familiar with the scripture that says Christ is the one who will deliver us from this body of death (Romans 7:24-25). God sent His Son in order that the "righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Romans 8:3-4). That, of course, means we don't practice sin. After all, Christ was manifested "to take away our sins" (1 John 3:5).

Let's be very clear about this. Sin is

the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4, KJV). Christ was sent to *take away transgression of law*. There is no penalty when there is no transgression. God only forgives us when we stop sinning. That involves a process of seeking His forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice, turning from wrong and committing to live by God's law from that point on.

To "know Christ and Him crucified" accomplishes this titanic task!

"Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin" (1 Peter 4:1). God is telling us that we must suffer if we expect not to sin. Patience and self-control, along with many other godly traits, demand a certain proportion of suffering.

"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's suffering" (verses 12-13).

We must resist the automatic urge to do it our way, the emotional outbursts and desires for revenge. We must endure the temptation and not sin. Greater suffering will come if we do sin! In reality, we have just two options—to not sin and suffer a little, or to sin and suffer much.

Knowing that Christ was crucified for us isn't the same as being willing to crucify the self to be like Christ in resisting sin.

Knowing Christ

When we belong to Christ and His mind is in us, we really "know" Him. The bond is so great that Christ was inspired to say, "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17:23).

"To know Christ and Him crucified" is to strive to live as He did—without sinning. Of course, He was without sin all His life, but we follow His example

by committing ourselves to not sinning, to becoming mature as Christ was mature. We begin the process at baptism when our "old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Romans 6:6).

We are not even to count ourselves as being alive since we were crucified with Christ and He lives in us (Galatians 2:20). "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (5:24).

Glory in Christ

The Corinthians were replete with talent and seemed to be glorying in that talent. Paul set the record straight from the very beginning in the first chapter of 1 Corinthians. He reminded them that "Jews request a sign and Greeks seek after wisdom" (verse 22). Those of us who are called are to know that Christ is the power (sign, so to speak) and wisdom of God (verse 24). Therefore Paul preached "Christ crucified" (verse 23). In other words, a Christian's power and strength comes through the mind of Christ in us, destroying sin, not being slaves to it. We have strength in being slaves to righteousness.

"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21). God expects us to suffer and not practice sin! Since God will never tempt us above that which we are able to take, it is always possible to refrain from sinning.

Aaron Burr, in his terrible rage, armed himself with a carnal weapon to destroy his enemy. We are told to arm ourselves with a weapon "mighty in God for pulling down strongholds [sin]" (2 Corinthians 10:4). That weapon is the mind of Christ in us! **UN**

This article previously appeared in the Spring 2003 Ministerial Quarterly.

"Council," continued from page 1

than the \$19 million that was budgeted.

Another way to analyze the income is to compare the last 365 days with the preceding period of 365 days. In the last 365 days the income is \$18.642 million. In the preceding 365 days the income was \$18.321 million—an increase of 1.76 percent. However, the budgeted increase for this fiscal year was 4.5 percent. Dr. Kirkpatrick has urged pastors to carefully review their subsidy requests and local budgets to hold spending down where possible.

Dr. Kirkpatrick reported that all areas of expense, with one exception, are at or below budget.

The one major exception is insurance and health care. In the last 365 days health-care expenses are 51 percent over the previous 365 days.

After the treasurer's report, Peter Eddington spoke (see "Media and Communications Services Stats" and other "News at a Glance" items, page 24).

Ministerial Services Report

Richard Pinelli, Ministerial Services

manager, reported that United's high attendance for the year was 12,718 on the Feast of Trumpets 2003. Average U.S. attendance on the Sabbath is almost 11,000.

Mr. Pinelli reviewed a number of areas of progress and efforts undertaken by Ministerial Services:

- There is the likelihood of two men being hired soon to serve in the ministry. But with another elder scheduled to retire in August, manpower needs are not diminishing.

- Tapes of the Ambassador Bible Center class on the Pentateuch will be sent soon to the local congregations. The classes on Daniel and Revelation as well as the General Epistles will be prepared next year.

- Audiotapes were recently sent to elders on the subject of premarital counseling and baptism.

2004-2005 Strategic Plan, Budget and Operation Plan

Council Chairman Clyde Kilough introduced the discussion of the planning documents, which the Council will present to the elders for their approval at

the Annual General Conference of Elders in May.

Aaron Dean presented the proposed Strategic Plan. Mr. Dean indicated that the plan is the same this year as last, with the inclusion of one new strategy: "Further develop programs to help youth gain spiritual maturity and build their relationship with God." The point was made that the Church is obviously actively engaged in teaching the youth, but this effort had not previously been specified as a strategy.

Dr. Kirkpatrick presented the Council with a proposal for a budget of \$19.5 million for 2004-2005. In putting together a conservative budget, Dr. Kirkpatrick pointed out that it isn't certain that we will reach the budgeted income level for the current fiscal year. He also emphasized the importance of realistically budgeting health-care and insurance costs, which leaves little increase in budget available for other areas. The expense areas were summarized as follows:

- Council of Elders. The budget remains the same.
- Home office. A net decrease of \$50,000 from the current budget.

- Media and public proclamation. A modest increase to allow the Spanish *GN* to increase from 15,000 to 20,000.

- International subsidies. Dr. Kirkpatrick pointed out that the declining value of the dollar makes it more expensive to subsidize international areas.

- Ministerial Services. A decrease in budget compared to the current year.

- Health care. A significant increase compared to the current budget.

- Executive reserve. Considerably less than last year.

The following had no change from the current budget: Assistance fund, Feast expenses, 403(b) contributions, GCE meeting.

For the Operation Plan:

- Dr. Kirkpatrick reported no changes for Finance and Accounting.

- Mr. Pinelli stated that the Ministerial Services Operation Plan includes the possibility of three-day regional conferences if income exceeds budget estimates. He highlighted the plan for educational seminars at U.S. Feast sites for teens, young adults and the ministry. Doug Horchak pointed out that child rearing and parenting resources will be

added to the ucgyouth.org Web site.

- Mr. Eddington noted that Media Operations will add support for the new *Vertical Thought* magazine. He also stated that there will be an effort to increase the *World News and Prophecy* circulation to 26,000 and the *GN* to 480,000.

Thursday, Feb. 26, the Council approved the recommendations of the 2004 General Conference of Elders Planning Task Force regarding question-and-answer sessions on ballot issues.

The Council also approved the outline for the Feast video, with the suggested title "I Shall Return," and highlighting the members in Southeast Asia and the Philippines.

There was also a report on the study paper on the subject of evangelism. The task force hopes to have it ready for Council review by the May meetings.

The Council agenda also included several items from the Doctrine Committee, including reviewing the first draft of a "Nature of God and Christ" paper and a "What Is Leavening?" paper.

For full Council reports, see www.ucg.org/about/council/updates.htm on the Web. **UN**



Local Church Updates

Accident Victim Becomes an Inspiration to Her Congregation

Marilyn Stevens was a healthy, vivacious 22-year-old with a big, bright world ahead of her until May 16, 1985, when an accident involving a semi-truck on an interstate highway in Tampa, Florida, left her with severe brain damage.

Fortunately, the accident occurred near Tampa General Hospital, a Level I Trauma Center. She had extreme damage to her brain and her family was warned that if she lived, it would likely be in a vegetative state. While she suffered a tracheotomy, strokes and cardiac arrests, a team of surgeons operated on her brain and put their skill into keeping her alive.

Marilyn was in a coma for seven weeks and woke up on her 23rd birthday. When she awoke, she asked the nurse who the visitors were that kept coming to see her. She had no memory of the accident or of her family.

During the five-and-a-half months of rehabilitation that followed, Marilyn had to relearn, among other things, how to walk, eat, brush her teeth and write. While she was permanently disabled, walked with the aid of a cane and was unable to open her left hand, Marilyn and her family were thankful she was alive.

After surviving the accident, Marilyn began to question the purpose of life and studied the Bible to find her part in it. In 1991, a member of the Church moved into her apartment building. After much discussion, he gave Marilyn the Bible Correspondence Course and other materials as she requested them. After counseling and attending services, Marilyn was baptized in 1994. Later that year she married her helpful neighbor, Terence Stevens.

Although she remains damaged from the accident, Marilyn realizes what a precious gift God has given by personally intervening and allowing her a second chance at life, not only physically, but also spiritually.

Her health and stamina have improved enough this past year that she rarely misses services now and has even been able to attend other Church-sponsored social activities.

Marilyn is a positive, charming lady who is not only a living testimony to God's healing intervention and grace, but an inspiration to our congregation.

Teddi Treybig

119 Attend Garden Grove Women's Enrichment Weekend

From Friday evening, Jan. 16 through Sunday afternoon, Jan. 18, 119 enthusiastic ladies attended the third annual

Women's Enrichment Weekend sponsored by the Women's Club of UCG-Garden Grove, learning and benefiting

from our theme "Meeting Life's Challenges." Most of the



From left, Aimee Lopez, 17, presents the challenges of the teen years (photo by Kris Talbott); attendees from afar—Valerie Curcuro (northern California) and Sheila Derr (Tucson, Arizona); Bev Pronishan, guest speaker from the Pacific Northwest (photos by Jean Updegraff)

ladies were from Southern California, but 29 ladies traveled from Arizona, and a few came from northern California and the Pacific Northwest. Our attendance has grown each year, with 42 attending for the first time this year. The location was the Country Inn & Suites in Costa Mesa, a beautifully appointed, European-inspired hotel.

The weekend began Friday evening with a dinner at a nearby restaurant for those able to attend, followed by a get-acquainted mixer at the hotel. On Sabbath morning, after several special music selections, Robin Webber, pastor of the San Diego and Loma Linda, California, congregations, set the tone of the weekend with an outstanding, positive message on "The Godly Gift of Forever Eyes."

Saturday afternoon began with tips on maintaining a healthy mind and body (Esther Salcedo), followed by Bev Pronishan, our guest speaker from the Pacific Northwest, who gave us vital keys to meeting life's challenges and making better decisions.

After a wonderful meal, the evening began with principles on coping with anxiety and stress (Vicki Scher) and reminders and tips on the need to be thankful (Erika Schmid). Afterwards, we had a fun-filled social hour moderated by Sylvia Kennedy where those seated at each table devised their own game.

Sunday morning seven ladies described their own challenges in a particular life stage: Teen years (Aimee Lopez); young adulthood (Jodie Turner), raising a family (Becky Garnant), empty-nest stage (Jean Updegraff), living as a single lady (Deborah Barr), coping with serious illness (Vy Young) and widowhood (Rosalie Foat). A question-and-answer opportunity followed. The presentations were outstanding, coming from the heart and personal experience; several were especially moving and touched the audience deeply.

After a delicious lunch by the pool, Bev Pronishan gave a thought-provoking presentation on "Turning the Other

Cheek," which was followed by Dianne Clark who closed with insights and valuable principles on how to respond to the needs and trials of others.

Evaluation forms were completed and the results were fantastically positive. One lady wrote: "It was just what I needed in my life and I didn't even know it. It was like a mini-Feast that filled up my spiritual piggy bank."

Jean Updegraff

Dallas Hosts Parenting Workshop

The Dallas, Texas, congregation of UCG hosted a parenting workshop on Jan. 24 with the theme of "Nurturing the Heritage From God." Douglas Horchak, pastor of the Dallas congregation, and Britton Taylor, pastor of the Fort Worth congregation, presented the workshop to 113 attendees from North Central Texas.

Two lectures, four workshops and a sermon focused on topics such as "The Power of Encouragement;" "Parenting the Teen—How Do We Relate?;" "The Church's Role in Parenting;" "The Pit-



falls of Parenting" and "Discipline—A Biblical Perspective."

Ladies from the Dallas congregation served a lunch to start the day off and a dinner of BBQ brisket, baked beans, salad and cheesecake after services. During dinner attendees listened to Tina Engelbart present "Priorities and Lessons I Learned as a Mother." Mrs. Engelbart recalled stories and lessons she learned and lived through during her years as a mother in God's Church.

For the final plenary session, Mr. Taylor spoke about "What Our Children Are/What We Want Them to Become" based on Psalm 127:3-5. He clarified how much influence we actually have in this goal. He addressed the short-term, intermediate and long-term goals we should set and strive for in our children's lives. Mr. Horchak gave the closing comments and the workshop concluded at 9:15 p.m.

Gregory H. Vaughn

Snow and Texas Hospitality Meet at Dallas Young Adults Weekend

Guests from all over the United States and as far away as Holland and Australia gathered together for a fantastic week-end of animated fellowship, seminars and friendly Texas hospitality! Many expressed that



Alyson Alexander greets young adults in Texas (photos by Doug Horchak)

they had an enjoyable weekend, as approximately 170 young adults converged in Dallas, Friday, Feb. 13, for a meet-and-greet evening, and then rose bright and early to the unexpected surprise of three inches of beautiful fluffy snow (quite unexpected by those trying to escape the snow in coming to Texas).

Brunch and seminars were the agenda for Sabbath morning and then combined services with the Dallas and Fort Worth congregations made for an even more enjoyable Sabbath. The seminars and messages were presented by Darris McNeely, Joel Meeker and Ralph Levy who all expounded on the weekend's theme of "Sharpening the Vision: A Look at Prophecy and the Kingdom." The weekend's purpose was to ignite a more zealous attitude through the hope that we all possess, as we prepare for our roles in the Kingdom, as well as keeping the image of the Kingdom clear and burning bright.

Saturday evening's entertainment was a 1930s themed black-and-white attire dinner dance set with the backdrop of the Dallas skyline and complementing decorations. Everyone dined on a London broil dinner, and then danced till they dropped to the various genres of music presented by DJ Arnold Mendez.

Sunday morning there was a brunch and a keynote address by Mr. McNeely. This was followed by a question-and-answer panel (consisting of the guest speakers, Jim Franks and Doug Horchak), which answered many of the questions submitted, though there were more questions than time available.

The afternoon activities began with a barbecue lunch at Park Lane Ranch, followed by lively rounds of miniature golf, table games, batting cages and fellowship. The day turned out beautiful, sunny, crisp and delightful

after the previous day's snow.

Those with the time off concluded the weekend with a tour of the Dallas World Aquarium on Monday, as this annual get-together of new friends and old acquaintances came to a close.

The Dallas young adults would like to thank everyone who traveled from near and far to make this weekend a success! Mark your calendars for next year, as Houston hosts the next Texas Young Adults Presidents' Day weekend event.

Alyson Alexander

Houston Teens Raise Funds With Enchiladas, Talent Show and Auction

The Houston North and Houston South, Texas, congregations came together on the evening of Jan. 31 to support their youth in a multifaceted teen fund-raising event. The evening began with a catered Mexican dinner, where 42 teens served in all capacities. While serving up more than 250 enchilada dinners, they also kept hot sauce flowing, as well as tea and lemonade. Additionally, the teens made desserts to follow the dinner. They were almost too pretty to eat! The dinner itself took the efforts of many, but it didn't stop there.

A silent auction also took place, with items donated by various Church members, as well as local establishments who willingly offered support to the Church teen group. In addition to items being auctioned, the teens also offered services such as babysitting, yard work and even haircuts, which were successfully bid upon.

After dinner, during the silent auction, the teens offered their talents on stage, performing humorous skits, vocal solos, musical concertos, band numbers and swing dancing for more than 300 audience members. There were 20 acts involved in the show itself, including a very unifying end-of-show finale.

The fund-raising event profited the Houston teens \$2,100. The efforts, teamwork and absolute unity of all of the Houston teens, however, proved



After the Houston teen show finale, the teens presented fund-raising coordinator Lisa Bentley-Gatewood with flowers (photo by Sharon Van Schuyver)

more valuable than any dollar amount could suggest. The teens came through with flying colors, and the evening proved fun and enjoyable for the entertainers, as well as their truly supportive Church family.

Sharon Van Schuyver

Announcements

Births

After a very early start in life, Savannah Mae Marie Salter is now ready to dance! Savannah surprised her mother and dad with a birthdate two months early on Nov. 12, 2003. She weighed in at 3 pounds 4 ounces



Savannah Mae Marie Salter

and was 17¼ inches long.

Her thrilled parents are Rob and Sarah Salter of Aurora, Colorado. Her grandparents on her mom's side are Don and Laura Peabody and her great-grandmother is Shirley Salmon. Her grandmother on her dad's side is Marlena Salter.

Savannah has more than doubled her birth weight in her first two months and is doing great, so we are all really proud of her!

Brian and Laurie McGuire of Ann Arbor, Michigan, are happy to announce the birth of their daughter, Audrey Lauren. She was born on Jan.



Audrey Lauren McGuire

9, 2004, weighing in at 8 pounds 1 ounce and was 21 inches long.

Big brothers Andrew and Aidan are thrilled with their sister. Proud grandparents are Larry and Karen Walker of Bend, Oregon, and Bev McGuire of Detroit, Michigan. Great-grandparents are Wade and Virginia Cole of Bend.

Hansel and Rachelle New of the Jefferson, Oregon, congregation are very happy to announce the birth of their first child, Emily Rose, born on Sept. 12, 2003. Emily weighed 7 pounds 7 ounces and measured 19¼ inches long. Proud grandparents are Dan and Gracie Miller of the Jeffer-



Emily Rose New

son congregation and first-time grandma Rose Long of Ontario, Oregon. The whole family is thrilled about her arrival.

Tracy and Valerie Davidson of the Birmingham, Alabama, congregation



Samuel Caleb Davidson

are very happy to announce the birth of their second son, Samuel Caleb. Samuel was born Oct. 12, 2003, and weighed 8 pounds 4 ounces and was 21 inches long. He was the best Feast gift we could ask for!

Travis and Stephanie Stotts of the East Texas congregation would like to announce the birth of their third child.



James "Wyatt" Stotts

James "Wyatt" was born at the Stotts home on Aug. 21, 2003, weighing 10 pounds 7 ounces and was 22¼ inches long. Older twin brothers Zane and Cole are thrilled about their new brother. The proud grandparents are Paul and Sandra Sylie of Big Sandy, Texas, and James and Rose Stotts of Llano, Texas.

Engagements

Ken and Kathy Treybig are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Kamie, to Jonathan Stoner,



Kamie Treybig and Jonathan Stoner

son of Larry and Joyce Stoner of the Dayton, Ohio, congregation. Plans are being made for an Aug. 22 wedding in Tyler, Texas.

Britton and Donna Taylor of Fort Worth, Texas, are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Laura Mychael, to Phillip Daniel Richey. The prospective groom is the son of Barry and Donna Richey of Dallas, Texas.



Laura Taylor and Dan Richey

A June wedding is planned in Fort Worth.

Weddings

Dean and Mary Kerr of the Springfield, Illinois, congregation are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter, Heather Yvonne, to Shawn Eugene Schwartzrock, son of Gerald and Ardelle Schwartzrock of the Fargo, North Dakota, congregation. The Dec. 21, 2003, ceremony was performed in Tallula, Illinois, by Larry Cortelyou.

The maid of honor was the bride's sister, Johanna; the best man was the groom's father, Gerald. Stephanie Smith, Katrina Weber, Jennifer Mazon, Fernanda González, Rhonda Saurbaugh and Savannah Schwartzrock attended the bride. Brent Schwartzrock, Lee Schwartzrock, Todd Schwartzrock, Sherwin Schwartzrock and Nicholas Welch attended the groom. Megan



Heather and Shawn Schwartzrock

Cortelyou served as train bearer, Emily Herkert as flower girl and Bradley Schwartzrock as ring bearer.

After honeymooning in San Jose del Cabo, Mexico, the couple returned to the Rockford, Illinois, area.

Anniversaries

Lee and Mary Carter celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on March 8, 2004, and the West Palm Beach, Florida, congregation planned a celebration with them for March 7.



Mary and Lee Carter

They were married in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1944 and have been members of God's Church since 1970. They now reside in Fellsmere, Florida. They have two sons, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. It is with much happiness that we join with them in this wonderful occasion.

Obituaries

William Marvin "Bill" House, 74, passed away Jan. 28, 2004, in an Aiken, South Carolina, hospital, after a lengthy illness. He was born May 2, 1929, in Maryland, son of the late John and Florence Humberston House. He and his wife were married on Jan. 26, 1953, and they just celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary. He was baptized in 1975, and a year later his wife, Marietta, was baptized. They attended services in the Hagerstown, Maryland, congregation before moving to South Carolina in 1999.

He was a WWII Army veteran and also served in the U.S. Marine Corps. He formerly worked for Fairchild Aircraft and retired from Rhor Industries. Mr.

House and his wife were foster parents to over 77 children.

He is survived by his wife, Marietta Catherine Cooper House; daughters, Angela Coennan, Cortnie Smith, Cheyanne Hollingsworth, Loretta Karhu, Carolyn Montgomery and Marie Waite; sons, Glen, Kenny and Harry House; sisters, Mary Margaret and Polly Conley; brother, Duane House; 19 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Memorial services were conducted on Feb. 1, 2004, in Williston, South Carolina, by Don Waterhouse, pastor of the Columbia and Florence, South Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia congregations and by George Trent, pastor in the Inter-continental Church of God.

Ernest Gibson, affectionately known to his friends simply as "Gib," passed away Jan. 20, 2004. A longtime member



Ernest "Gib" Gibson

of God's Church, Gib was the last surviving member of the legendary Northwest Mounted Police, the organization that eventually became the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Gib was 102 years of age. He was born in a small town called East London in South Africa in 1901, before Henry Ford introduced his automobile, before Wilbur and Orville Wright tested their first airplane and before Albert Einstein introduced his theory of relativity.

After arriving in Canada in the early 1900s, Gib served as an original Mountie on the Canadian prairies and later in the Canadian Army.

His memorial service was conducted by UCG pastor David Palmer Jan. 25 in Comox, British Columbia. The service, with over 200 in attendance, included a military and RCMP presence, with a full color guard of Mounties, as well as war veterans and Legionnaires. Mrs. Helen Gibson was given an RCMP escort and the traditional presentation of the Canadian flag in honor of Gib's service to his country.

During his 100th year Gib had received accolades from hundreds of well wishers including the queen of England, and the prime minister of Canada.

Until his death Gib was still able to observe Sabbath services. He is survived by Helen, his wife of 62 years, and son, Doug, of Victoria, British Columbia.

Robert Allen Wood, 81, of Greencastle, Indiana, died Feb. 7, 2004, at Hickory Creek at Sunset Nursing Home after

an extended illness. He was born July 1, 1922, in Staunton, Indiana. He attended school in Staunton but was unable to finish school due to the need to help feed the family during the Great Depression. He worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps for a period of time during the Depression. He volunteered for the



Robert Wood

Army during World War II, but was never sent overseas.

His primary occupation was an auto mechanic, and he enjoyed gardening and fishing. He married Betty Jean Mooney on June 21, 1951; she preceded him in death on April 3, 1987. He and his wife were both members of God's Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, and later on in Terre Haute, Indiana. They both started attending church in 1962.

Surviving are a son, Mike Allen Wood, and daughter-in-law, Amy, of Poland, Indiana; two granddaughters, Melissa Ann Elmore, of Greencastle Indiana, and Amanda Marie Mishler, of Poland, Indiana; and a brother, Paul Richard, and wife of Illinois. In addition to his wife, he was preceded in death by two sisters, Lena Rose Wood and Eva Marie Newby. Victor Kubik conducted the funeral service.

A memorial service was held in Red Bluff, California, for Myrna Leonhardt, 64, on Nov. 2, 2003. The service was conducted by Jim Chapman, pastor of the Red Bluff congregation.

Myrna and her husband, Larry, were attending the Feast in Bend/Redmond, Oregon, when she became ill on the third day. She was taken to the hospital on

Oct. 12, where she died a few hours later from a heart problem complicated by diabetes.

Myrna was born and reared in Denver, Colorado. After high school she married Larry Leonhardt and moved to Canon City, Colorado, where they raised six children. Both Larry and Myrna were baptized in 1974 in Pueblo, Colorado. The family moved to San Diego, California, in 1983 and then north to Redding, California, in 1999.

Myrna is survived by her husband, Larry, three sons and two daughters, 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Myrna was a happy person and enjoyed working in the health care field for many years. She also loved knitting, crocheting and other crafts. She sang special music for services on various occasions and was always concerned for others. Throughout her illness (lasting several years), she was



Myrna Leonhardt

always quick to smile, offer encouragement and give a positive word.

Having brethren in her home and music brought her much pleasure. Myrna had great faith in the coming Kingdom of God, and her passing during the Feast seemed to properly finalize her hopes and prayers. She will be sorely missed.

Rose Nikodem, 82, of Oneida, Wisconsin, died Feb. 7, 2004, at home. She was a longtime Church member who attended the Oshkosh, Wisconsin, congregation.

On Aug. 17, 1940, she married Mike Nikodem. They farmed for many years

Tribute: Andrew M. Prettyman

Andrew M. Prettyman came from the small town of Leeco in rural Appalachian Eastern Kentucky. It was a depressed area where oil was discovered and the Prettyman family, along with hundreds of others, converged on the sparsely populated community in a hastily erected "tent city" for those working in the oil fields. It was in the family tent that Andrew was born on Sept. 2, 1920. He died of heart failure at age 83 on Feb. 17, 2004.

Andy grew up in Eastern Kentucky, completing high school before hitchhiking to New York to work at odd jobs before enlisting in the Army Air Corps in the 123rd AAF unit at Wright Patterson Air Base in Dayton, Ohio. He began service on May 22, 1942, eventually becoming a "link trainer" until the end of the war in 1945. The "link" was a simulated airplane used to train pilots for the Air Corps in World War II. Later he worked for the Naval Department in Washington, D.C., taking congressmen and other dignitaries on tours of new ships on the first debarkation.

in Oneida. Mike preceded her in death on Aug. 20, 1982. Rose volunteered her time at a local food pantry where she had many friends. She found great comfort



Rose Nikodem

in studying the Bible and spending time with her family and friends.

Rose is survived by one son and five

daughters. She was preceded in death by six sons, a daughter and one grandson. Michael Hanisko, pastor of the Oshkosh congregation, conducted the funeral.

Maurice G. Cline, 69, of Gilbert, Arizona, died Oct. 12, 2003, in Mesa, Arizona. He was a member of the Phoenix East congregation. Mr. Cline was a retired Marine Corps captain, serving 21 years, and was born in Havensville, Kansas. He also formerly worked for Luce Press Clippings for 10 years and owned Apex Janitorial & Pest Control.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Jane; daughters, Denise Mundy, Beth Winn, Lorella Schafer and Brenda Cline; brothers, John, Paul and Harold; grandchildren, Kyle Mundy, Chris Cline Schafer, Crystal Dergins, Vanessa

daughters. She was preceded in death by six sons, a daughter and one grandson.

He was a member of the Phoenix East congregation. Mr. Cline was a retired Marine Corps captain, serving 21 years, and was born in Havensville, Kansas. He also formerly worked for Luce Press Clippings for 10 years and owned Apex Janitorial & Pest Control.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Jane; daughters, Denise Mundy, Beth Winn, Lorella Schafer and Brenda Cline; brothers, John, Paul and Harold; grandchildren, Kyle Mundy, Chris Cline Schafer, Crystal Dergins, Vanessa



Andrew M. Prettyman

nessee; Louisville, Kentucky; Findlay, Ohio; Lexington and Mt. Sterling, Kentucky; and most recently Lexington as an elder in the United Church of God.

Andrew Prettyman is remembered as a great father who was devoted to his wife. He leaves behind his wife of 55 years, Millie; three children: Tony of Hopkinsville, Kentucky; Anetta Nichols of Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Jonathan of Lexington; all of whom are members of the United Church of God.

Schafer, Chase Schafer and Caden Winn. He was also looking forward to the birth of his first great-grandson.

He was preceded in death by a grandson, Chad Cochran, a sister and a brother.

He was a loving husband, father and grandfather and will be missed by many family and friends.

Ray Calhoun, 74, of Sandston, Virginia, died unexpectedly Feb. 14, 2004. He retired from the Ford Motor Company and was an Army veteran. He is survived by his wife, Barbara, two sons and a daughter.

Services were held Feb. 17 by Todd Carey, pastor of the Williamsburg, Virginia, congregation. Ray is greatly missed by his brothers and sisters in Christ.

Letters

Request to Reprint

I read two very good articles in the online version of the February 2004 *United News* and would like to share them with some others. I thought I had better ask you for your permission to make copies, though. The two articles are: "Breaking the Cycle of Abuse" by John W. Cafourek and "Take Action! Your Life May Depend on It" by Janet Treadway.

Colorado

Permission was gladly granted.

Domestic Abuse Articles

Thank you for the articles on domestic abuse in their most recent issue of *United News*. They deeply touched and moved me.

Internet

Swedish Translator Found

Gentlemen . . . we got him! Excuse the obvious pun. In response to our request for Swedish translators in the February *United News*, we received a letter from a man living in the United States who was born in Sweden. He speaks and reads Swedish fluently. Once the translations are completed, spell checked and grammar checked, we can send them to him for final reading/doctrine check before they are put on the Web.

We also got a reply from a couple of young adults who don't speak Swedish but plan to travel there in 2005 and want to help put magazines out.

Paul and Kira Spenser
Isle of Man

The Spensers are in the process of moving to Sweden.

Correction

The photo of the Davao City, Philippines, congregation campout (February issue, page 13) was taken by Edmond Macaraeg, not Charles Macaraeg.

Vertical Thought

The *Vertical Thought* magazine has helped me inspire some of my classmates to learn about our religion and attend some of our services. I just want to thank you!

Internet

I'd like to say how much I enjoyed your latest issue of *Vertical Thought*. Dating is such a misunderstood topic and not many people teach young people the rights and wrongs of it all.

New Zealand

UCG Commentary on the Web

"Waiting for the Other Shoe to Drop" (www.ucg.org/commentary): What an awesome article by one of my favorite writers, Scott Ashley! I believe it is time for God's Church to be more vocal about the perversions and utter stupidity that is so prevalent in our society today. They are doing everything they can to "push the envelope" to the next lowest level!

Let's do everything we can personally and collectively to get God's message of hope and truth to this world, doing our part to speed the return of Jesus Christ to "put all things right" once again! Thanks to the entire GN staff for all your efforts and articles.

Texas

World News and Prophecy

I always read *World News and Prophecy* from cover to cover. With this January issue I have learned much, as always. I like the fact you seek to help everyone, not just Baptists, Catholics or others. This is very refreshing. Your message is for all of those who choose to read it.

Internet

Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Comments and suggestions to improve *United News* 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.

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

nately, the U.S. Postal Service has been extremely slow in delivering these statements. Some members began receiving them two weeks after the home office mailed them. But some still had not received them at press time.

"We have registered a complaint with the Postal Service and they are looking into the problem, but we still have not heard what the problem was," said Connie Seelig, who supervises donation processing. "If you have not yet received your 2003 Statement of Donations, you can send an e-mail to 2003statements@ucg.org," she said. "We'll be happy to e-mail you a copy if necessary. You may also write to the home office at: United Church of God, Attn: 2003 Statements of Donation, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027. Thank you for your patience and understanding."

New Ministerial Trainee Hired in Melbourne

The Australian National Council offered employment as a ministerial trainee to Paul Vaughan. Paul has accepted this offer and in March will begin to assist with pastoral responsibilities in the southern and western areas of Australia.

Paul and his wife, Susan, live in Melbourne with their two children, Chloe (4) and Mitchell (2). They attend both the Bacchus Marsh and Melbourne East congregations.

New Promotional Brochures Target Young Families and Supermarkets

Three brand-new *Good News* advertising brochures have been designed to attract younger families with children,



What's New on the Web?

On www.ucg.org

■ UCG Commentary on This Week's News

Weekly commentaries by UCG written on world news and trends, from a biblical perspective. Read these and more: "Unusual Movie; Predictable Result" "The Super Bowl Sexual Assault: An Assault on Our Culture" "Waiting for the Other Shoe to Drop" "Without Blood on My Hands"

www.ucg.org/commentary/

■ Current World News & Trends

Browse up-to-date world news events by subject categories!

www.ucg.org/worldnews/

■ E-mail Updates and UCG eNews

Receive e-mail updates relevant to UCG members and weekly HTML newsletters with ucg.org updates. Sign up today!

www.ucg.org/contact/updates.htm

On vcmagazine.org

■ The March *Virtual Christian Magazine* includes "Lessons From Two Resurrections," "What's My Purpose Here?," "Where Have All the Leaders Gone?," "Choosing Movies and Music: What's Going Into Your Mind?" and "Become Like Little Children."

vcmagazine.org

On verticalthought.org

■ The April-June issue of *Vertical Thought* will have articles on "A Beautiful, Vertical Mind," "Personalizing Passover: What About Unbaptized Young People?," evolution, lasting marriages, Q&As, news and more.

verticalthought.org

Other Helpful Links

■ Youth and young adults' Web site.

www.ucgyouth.org

■ Singles' Web site for singles in the Church.

www.ucgsingles.org

■ Good News Bible Reading Program.
www.ucg.org/brp

■ Good News Web site.
www.gnmagazine.org

■ Anchor: A message of hope for those struggling with homosexuality.
www.anchorhelp.com

■ Good News/Tomorrow TV station listings.
www.ucg.org/multimedia/gntv.htm

■ Good Works Program
www.ucg.org/goodworks/

■ UCG News pages with Council meeting reports, letters, Home Office Updates, etc.
www.ucg.org/about/council
www.ucg.org/about/homeoffice

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

from newborn to age 12. We have arranged to test 900,000 of these brochures in several mailing programs from February to April. If these tests are successful, we anticipate mailing over 3 million similar promotions during the next fiscal year, beginning July 1.

Additionally, beginning in May, we will make available over 300,000 copies of two other new *Good News* subscription brochures on "take-one" displays in 3,000 major supermarkets and discount stores. These stores include Wal-Mart, Kroger, Meijer, Shop Rite and many others located in large and small communities throughout the United States.

One of the new brochures is titled *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* and the other is titled *Are You Feeling Overwhelmed?* These captivating brochures will offer readers helpful and edifying booklets and a *GN* subscription.

John LaBissoniere

Families for God Weekend, Teen Prom/Lock-in Announced

The annual Families for God Weekend and Teen Dinner/Prom/Lock-in will be held May 15 and 16 this year, sponsored by the St. Paul/Minneapolis, Minnesota, congregations.

Doug Horchak, pastor of the Dallas, Texas, congregation and a member of the Council of Elders, will be the guest speaker for Sabbath services.

After Sabbath services there will be a series of afternoon seminars. Topics will include: "Parenting" by Doug Horchak, "Are We Leaders?" by Steve Myers and "Reducing and Overcoming Conflict" by Steve Shafer. Seminars for teens, young adults/singles and women are also being planned. There will be children's Sabbath activities provided for ages 1 to 12 years during the seminars.

Snacks will also be provided before the seminars.

Sabbath evening will be a potluck dinner, games at the Church hall and a family gym and swim night (for a minimal fee).

Attention Teens: There will be a teen dinner and prom. After the prom, a teen lock-in will be hosted at a fully equipped facility with a gym for volleyball and basketball, swimming pool, whirlpool, racquetball courts and weight room for those over 16 years of age. Details to register for this event are available online.

Sunday activities will include a Church family picnic and picnic games.

Housing will be available with brethren in the area. There are several hotels that are close to the activities.

Regional church areas have been sent registration forms. Forms and details may be obtained from the St. Paul Web site at www.ucgstp.org. Families for God Weekend contacts are Don Finger at DonJFing@aol.com and Cathy Folker at cfolker@presenter.com. We look forward to seeing you there!

Gale Black

Which Promotions Bring the Most GN Renewals?

A study of renewal figures for U.S. *Good News* subscribers who have come onto the list from 1996 to 2001 shows the following promotions bring the highest renewal rates:

- Direct mail, 37 percent.
- Space ads (primarily *Reader's Digest* ads), 35 percent.
- TV programming, 29 percent.
- Radio programming, 27 percent.
- Card decks, 27 percent.
- Subscription brochure, 26 percent.
- Insert card, 25 percent.

The overall average (after discounting the "unknown" and "misc." categories) is 25.3 percent.

The majority of subscribers were added in 2001 and 2002. Since the renewal cycle is two years, results for many of these are not yet available.

Media and Communications Services Stats

Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services operation manager, presented the following statistics to the Council of Elders Feb. 25:

- Print promotions for the *GN* are going into 7.2 million homes this fiscal year.
- Card-deck advertisements currently have a very good \$2.47 cost per response.
- As of Jan. 31, 16,358 people were enrolled in the *Bible Study Course* in the United States. In addition, 3,721 *BSC* graduates were receiving the follow-up 12-month audiotape program. Also, 2,026 audiotape graduates (32 percent) have responded to the offer for additional contact with the Church.
- A total of 8,624 responses have come

through the *GN* radio program. We are currently on 14 stations (see www.ucg.org/radio).

- *World News and Prophecy* is being sent to 16 percent more households than a year ago. We offer it to new coworkers and those who have been through the *BSC* graduate audiotape program. It will also be highlighted in the *GN* in an effort to increase non-member subscriptions from 7,200 to 15,000.
- As of January, there are 5,283 donors on file (a 22 percent increase) and 2,309 coworkers (a 21 percent increase).
- A study of donations showed that most donations come from those first added to the file from a gift subscription, insert card or the Internet, with the highest average from the Internet.



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