Two Amendments Passed by GCE

The General Conference of Elders passed two amendments to the By-laws of the United Church of God. The two amendments are:

Amendment to Bylaws 8.4.3—this allows the Council to operate when there are no candidates in line to fill the vacancy or vacancies (so long as there is a quorum of 8 Council members for a meeting), and also gives the Council the authority to appoint someone to a vacancy until it can be filled by an election. This amendment passed with 203 yes votes, 28 no votes.

Amendment to Bylaws 9.1 and 9.2—no member of the management team (all officers and operation managers) may serve concurrently on the Council. This amendment passed with 201 yes votes, 29 no votes.

General Conference Chooses New Council of Elders Members

The General Conference of Elders balloted and chose new members to serve on the Council of Elders. There were already two vacant seats on the Council, one of which (the international seat) is terminating this year. The General Conference elected Gary Antion to fill the other vacant seat, which will terminate in June 2014. Along with the vacant international seat, the seats on the Council held by Aaron Dean, Darris McNeely and Robin Webber were up for election. The General Conference elected Darris McNeely, Donald Ward and Robin Webber to the three U.S. seats and Antion to fill the other vacant seat, the seats on the Council held which will terminate in June 2013.

Along with the vacant international seat, all four of which were already two vacant seats on the Council of Elders. There is not ultimately to men, but to God and Jesus Christ. The disciples of Jesus had many arguments about who would be greatest in the Kingdom to come, but Christ corrected them, setting the example of what true Christian leadership looks like—service to God and service to men. As Mr. Seiglie explained, Jesus gave eight different titles to those in the Church, all of which have origins in servitude:

1. doulos, the lowliest in a household, who would wash the feet of guests,
2. diakonos, one who waits tables, and the origin of our word “deacon,”
3. huperetes, which literally means “under-rower,” referring to one who works in the galley of a ship, and which is the Greek word translated as “minister,” one who brings people out of darkness,
4. poimen, one who is a shepherd,
5. episkopos, literally, “overseer;” one who takes care of the sheep,
6. presbuteros, meaning an older man; one who has spiritual maturity and insight,
7. euaggelistes, one who brings good news to others and the Greek word from which we receive the English, “evangelist,”
8. apostolos, one sent by authority. It is Jesus Christ’s authority on which the gospel is sent, not that of the apostles.

Mr. Seiglie finished his keynote by encouraging all the elders to follow the example of service set by Jesus, which continues to serve us to this day, encouraging all the elders to follow the example of what true Christian leadership looks like—service to God and others.

GCE Report: Biblical Eldership

In the Jordan Volunteers Report, the Ministry in its mission to serve God and service to others.

by Mitchell Moss

That was the theme of the 2011 General Conference of Elders, which re-energized the service as elders and ministers is not ultimately to men, but to God and Jesus Christ. The disciples of Jesus had many arguments about who would be greatest in the Kingdom to come, but Christ corrected them, setting the example of what true Christian leadership looks like—service to God and service to men.

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Mr. Seiglie finished his keynote by encouraging all the elders to follow the example of service set by Jesus, which continues to serve us to this day, serving Him and others in the spiritual body of Christ of which the United Church of God is a part.
God Protects and Leads Transformation of International Work

Africa was one focus in the 2010-2011 international reports given at the GCE.

by Howard Davis and Melvin Rhodes

Africa was a particular focus in the 2010-2011 annual international reports at the General Conference of Elders. At Sunday morning’s meetings, Chairman Melvin Rhodes led the presentation with amazing stories of God’s interventions to preserve the integrity of the United Church of God throughout the world. It was a summary of events across the world where individuals, coming from continents away, helped one another as God enacted providential breakthroughs and heroism through patient faith and divine insight. Members put the clarity of Scripture first to provide a platform for the subjects presented.

Most people don’t understand the size and complexity of Africa. It is an immense area from east to west, as well as from north to south. Cultural diversity is the greatest of any continent on the planet. The distance from the west coast African city of Dakar, Senegal, on the Atlantic Ocean to Mombasa, Kenya, on Africa’s east coast is greater than Dakar to Washington D.C., across the Atlantic. The area of the United States can fit three times in Africa with room to spare. See “The True Size of Africa.”

Mr. Rhodes described the situation throughout Africa where he, along with Ministerial and Member Services Manager Victor Kubik, led the efforts to preserve God’s churches in Africa. Mr. Rhodes’ pastoral background serving congregations for many years in Ghana and Rhodesia, now called Zimbabwe, was useful to the United Church of God throughout the crisis.

The southern African countries of Zambia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Malawi experienced major disruptions of the church when all six ministers left, though in some areas, most members did not. Mr. Rhodes said that for months, brethren “had been cut off from information from the Home Office.” Lack of Internet/e-mail for many in these international areas and direct misinformation by certain men were causing confusion and uncertainty in the congregations. Predatory activities of former ministers in the midst of the confusion meant, in the words of Mr. Rhodes, “The sooner we could get to them the better. There were problems everywhere.”

With a zeal for the membership like the apostle Paul, it was... See “International,” page 5

Good Works Raising Money to Buy Bus for Zambian Brethren

We are happy to see God working in the lives of those called and chosen in various parts of the world. Some are in developing countries, and some are in the poorest of lands. Zambia, according to a United Nations study, is the fourth poorest country in the world.

I have travelled to Zambia many times, most recently in April of this year and earlier in January. I have met with our brethren in the Mufulira church and was privileged to be with them on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, where I was also able to baptize two women. The Mufulira church has 35-40 people overseen by Derrick Pringle. They have a problem, though. Nobody has reliable transportation to services. That is not uncommon in some of our poorer areas, but here, the method of transport is very marginal and even unsafe.

On a recent trip there, as the Pringles, my wife and I were driving to services, we would pick up various brethren on the road and they would climb into the back of the Pringle’s SUV. As Derrick Pringle and I talked about it, we were very excited and enthusiastic about this project. The bus would also be used for other Zambia Church events such as the Youth Corps, Youth Camps and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Can you help? The bus will cost $24,000 and provide a much-needed service for our Zambian brethren. Send your tax-exempt donations to United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027. On the memo line of your check, write “UCG Zambia.” If you have any questions, contact me at victor_kubik@ucg.org.

We really appreciate your support for this project!

Victor Kubik

The current arrangement in Mufulira, Zambia, for taking Church members to weekly Sabbath services.
Jehovah’s Witnesses in the 1930s and 1940s. He was always a regular churchgoer growing up. “As a child, I did not have to go to church and didn’t want to go.” But, “By 1955, I wanted to go to church,” he said. He began visiting various Christian denominations. He finally settled on a Baptist church in Pleasant Grove, Alabama, and was baptized.

But in 1960 his brother made him angry by challenging him to listen to the World Tomorrow radio program. “I began that night at 7 p.m. listening,” he said. When he heard about the Sabbath booklet, he requested it and studied it day and night for a month. After more studying and listening, he was baptized into God’s Church in April of 1961. He has served as a deacon in the Church since 1973 and is happy to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his baptism into the same Church he attends to this day.

At age 85, he is still very active. R.C. plays tennis up to twice per week and maintains an active social life that keeps him in contact with many others. This active lifestyle is what he credits for his longevity.

Profile: R.C. Pritchett

You’ve heard this phrase before, haven’t you? “It’s not all about you!” We usually hear it when we’ve become selfish or have stopped thinking about the needs of other people around us. It often takes a good friend or our spouse to utter those words to us!

Well, there is actually a lot of wisdom in those five words. And when it comes to spiritual matters, it’s never all about you. It’s never all about me. A son and daughters in family’s, it’s all about God, not us.

Until You Know...

We have to constantly remember that but for the grace of God we are nothing. The skills, talents and abilities we have are to be used to glorify God, not ourselves. Over the millennia, there have been numerous stories recorded of men and women who took too much upon themselves—leaving God out of the picture.

You will remember the famous story of Nebuchadnezzar, which was reduced to the life of an animal after uttering these infamous words: “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30 emphasis added throughout). After pronouncing these words Nebuchadnezzar was told by God: “Your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field...until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses” (verse 32).

Don’t Get the “Big Head”

It’s not just kings who can get “the big head.” We too must always be watchful over the successes we may have in preaching the gospel. For, “Let us be reminded to always give the glory to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...for He is the one who can do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (verses 20, 21).

Forwards

It’s Not All About You

R.C. Pritchett

“You will remember the famous story of Nebuchadnezzar, which was reduced to the life of an animal after uttering these infamous words: “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30 emphasis added throughout). After pronouncing these words Nebuchadnezzar was told by God: “Your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field...until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses” (verse 32).
Victor Kubik Presents Four Guiding Principles of Biblical Eldership to GCE

by Scott Moss

In a dramatic and heartfelt Monday morning presentation to the 200 elders present (or connected via the Internet) at the General Conference of Elders on May 16, Director of Ministerial and Member Services Victor Kubik covered four guiding principles of authentic biblical eldership.

Audio of the 45-minute plenary session, along with the other presentations given at the conference, will be available on the ministerial website.

The four principles related to effective shepherding of God’s flock are to feed, lead, meet the needs and protect.

1. Feed—In John 21, Jesus Christ made a direct requirement of the apostle Peter, and by extension for elders, saying three times, “Feed My sheep.” This includes providing spiritual help, sound Biblical instruction and a mature perspective on eternal truths.

2. Lead—As shepherds of the flock, elders should emulate the characteristics of biblical figures such as King David, who was known among other things as the human shepherd of Israel. David led Israel skillfully, with organization, management and character. As a shepherd after God’s own heart, David brought God’s people Israel to a position of national strength and preeminence. So too should the eldership lead their congregations decently and in order to reflect strength and stability.

3. Meet the needs—On a daily basis, elders have a biblical mandate (Acts 20:35 among others) to comfort the sorrowing, giving them strength and encouragement.

4. Protect—Again the example is of David, who took his life in his hands to rescue the sheep from the paw of the bear and the paw of the lion in 1 Samuel 17:34. Christ Himself warned of false prophets to be strongly resisted (Matthew 7:15), and one of the major duties of an elder is to rescue the sheep from predators, to stand in the gap and to go after the lost sheep (Luke 15:4).

Victor Kubik addresses the GCE in a Monday morning plenary session on the topic of Biblical eldership and respect this unique culture.

The Jordan Volunteers: An Awe Inspiring, Life Changing Experience

by Stella Helterbrand

The Jordan project has been an awe inspiring, life changing experience for me. As I write this article, I have two months left in Amman, and it’s time to start reflecting on the previous eight months. During my time here, I have had ups and downs, highs and lows, wins and losses. Through it all, I have learned that the best way to deal with things is to focus on the positive and pull lessons from the negative. Having a positive outlook on living life in a different culture has helped me to fully appreciate and enjoy this wonderfully unique opportunity to serve in the Middle East.

Patience and Flexibility

In a culture where things are taken one day or one step at a time, this is a valuable lesson. There are many examples of this I can share, but here’s just one: Upon arrival at the school, the office I was in did not have any office equipment or adequate furniture. Thankfully, over the course of a few days all the items necessary for me to work were provided. I’ve learned to be flexible and patient; especially when dealing with those I work with and am around on a regular basis. Being able to remain patient and flexible has helped me to have a better understanding of others, enjoy Jordan to the fullest and build character.

Understand, Appreciate, Respect

Living in Jordan is completely different than living in America, and being able to understand, appreciate and respect the culture provides a better picture of the people and their country. Little things one would never think of being an issue can create quite a bit of conversation around the water cooler. For example, let’s say you’re a single American female, you’re friends with a single Jordanian male, and he offers to drive you home, to the store or dinner. In the States, you wouldn’t think anything of this: just two friends hanging out. In Jordan, however, a number of consequences may follow—you may be thought of as dating, you may become a “prize” to him, and his friends may tell him if they see you with someone else. Knowing little things like this and adapting your behavior and thinking will help you understand, appreciate and respect this unique culture.

Keep My Light Shining Bright

There are daily challenges in life no matter where you are, and it is essential to keep your light shining bright. Being able to take daily situations, big or small, and pull a positive lesson out of them has helped me in trying to keep my light shining bright. I’ve learned there are little things I do that say so much about how I am feeling. Knowing this, putting more thought into my actions and listening to others has helped in keeping my light shining bright. Having been put in some amazing, interesting and trying situations, I’ve had to remember not to let the light go out. Also, while serving others and trying to make a difference for those individuals, I am working on personal growth.

There are ways more than three lessons I’ve learned serving in this amazing country, but these are the three that have helped me the most. One never knows where life’s road will lead or what tomorrow will bring, but building character today will help for tomorrow. Living life with flexibility and patience; understanding, appreciating and respecting where you are and keeping your light shining bright will help you set your mind on the most important relationship of all.
Francophone Africa

The French speaking countries in Africa were an acute concern because of the language barrier. “We have very few French speakers among the eldership,” said Mr. Rhodes, “and there were even fewer men who could go because of full-time jobs.” It was particularly difficult to resolve the problems for brethren in the small French-speaking Atlantic coast West African nations of Benin, Togo and Cameroon, each with their own distinct cultures and native languages.

Mr. Rhodes does not speak French, so on March 13, he took a French speaking-volunteer, Jack Scruggs, as translator for a whirlwind seven-day trip to help the brethren in

The brethren asked candid questions and received equally candid answers regarding the difficulties in church leadership. Mr. Rhodes was very forthcoming that the members were not the cause of the crisis but the unfortunate victims of a struggle by former U.S. ministers over the control of power in the church. In an interview later, Jack Scruggs explained that the Cotonou brethren and leadership “noted the contrast between Mr. Rhodes’ message of the UCG ministry of service and their previous minister’s desire to lead.” They were not “impressed with the perceived arrogance” of that minister when he had very recently visited Cotonou, urging them to split away from United to follow him in creating a different church. The brethren had said that they had only had one ministerial visit every two years. Melvin Rhodes assured the brethren of the commitment of the home office leadership to ensure a minister visit them on a much more regular basis.

**Official Opposition**

After an overnight stay in Douala, Cameroon, where they were met by the local deacon, Moise Mabot, the three men flew to Cotonou, the capital of Benin, a country the size of Tennessee. They had to wait all day for their Air Chad flight, which was six hours late. Mr. Rhodes told the GCE that the authorities “were not very nice, didn’t seem to want us in the country, threatened to deport us and put us on the next plane out. I noticed that [the next plane out] was to Libya! Things were not looking very good!” The deacon, Mr. Ganagla, in the Cotonou, Benin, church, talked with customs officials at the airport. Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Scruggs were able to get in with a “transit” visa. They learned this meant that they had only 48 hours before they had to be out of the country. The delegation then had dinner at the hotel, along with the elder from the Lagos, Nigeria, congregation, Oludare Akinbo.

Wednesday, Mr. Rhodes met with the entire Cotonou church for three hours in the evening. He gave a Bible study, translated by Mr. Scruggs into French, on preparing for Passover. Included in the sermon was a segment on examining yourself in the light of Galatians 5, the fruit of the spirit. He spent some time elaborating on the first fruit of the spirit, which is (agape) love. After the study, there was a Q & A, during which members asked, “Where is this love?” They said, “We’ve never felt it.”

Mr. Scruggs went to the Benin national police headquarters and the Foreign Ministry to ask for an extension on the 48-hour transit visa. He was told that if they were still in the country after the deadline, they had to report to the Department of Immigration. Mr. Scruggs explained that the Cotonou brethren and the church. In an interview later, Jack Scruggs translated the two-hour meeting in the same format of sermon and Q&A. The questioning was very sharp but appropriate in light of the crisis. Mr. Rhodes was asked about the former minister’s claims that United’s leadership was going to abolish the Sabbath, Holy Days and also many other accusations.

Mr. Rhodes explained that these fabrications were without any basis in fact. He attributed the lies to Satan, the author of chaos.
Against the Odds

As a high school math instructor, one of the topics that I cover in some of my classes is probability, or setting the odds. Probability can be defined as the numerical likelihood that a given event will actually occur. It seems inevitable that a true Christian is going to frequently face battles throughout their lifetime where the odds are against them.

Part of it is due to the fact that true Christians are overwhelmingly outnumbered in the world—in the neighborhood of 50,000 to one. We face a multitude of situations in which the worldly, mathematical odds are definitely against us. This can be very discouraging. So discouraging that we can be tempted to try to improve the odds by compromising our beliefs, lowering our standards and rationalizing to make ourselves an exception to God’s laws. In times like these and so many others, when the human odds are truly against us, we need to keep a Godly perspective in mind.

1. Don’t ever be intimidated by the odds!

Be strong, of good courage and don’t be afraid to battle hard just because the odds are against you. The odds only predict the outcome. They don’t determine the outcome. Even in worldly circumstances, we find examples of heroic battles against overwhelming odds. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, “Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might,” in spite of what the odds might say, because later in verse 11, we read, “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong...nor favor to men of skill.”

2. Having God on your side is better than having the odds on your side. Historically, we can be greatly encouraged by just a few of the many biblical examples where God intervened when His people faced long odds. For example, what were the odds that Gideon and a small band of 300 men would be able to rout multiple thousands of Midianites? Or what were the odds that Hezekiah and his people would be able to withstand the massive Assyrian army that was poised to attack Jerusalem? Who can forget the story of Elisha and his servant when they were surrounded by the Syrian army? Elisha told his servant, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them” (2 Kings 6:16). Don’t look to the physical odds, look to the spiritual odds. In all of these situations, the odds of these events happening in the way that they did without God’s intervention would be unbelievably astronomical!

3. Obey God, even if you have to accept the outcome predicted by the odds. In Daniel chapter 2, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego knew that the odds of surviving the fiery furnace were severely set against them. But they didn’t break God’s commandments, even though it could have meant losing their lives! As they stated in Daniel 3:17-18, they knew that the God that they served was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace, but even if He chose not to deliver them (and they therefore had to accept the outcome predicted by the odds), they were still resolved not to worship the gold image or serve other gods.

4. When the odds are against us, we have the opportunity to demonstrate faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). One of the ways that Christians today are tested is in matters that have to do with jobs, wages and finances. Peter wrote that the genuineness of our faith is more precious than gold (1 Peter 1:6). God desires to give us every good and every perfect gift, especially when we are working hard to multiply the talents that He has given us and follow his commands.

In our society today, the numbers are against us and a true Christian will face difficult odds and predicaments. But that’s not a reason to be discouraged or intimidated. The key is to courageously and faithfully stay committed to God no matter what the odds! Jesus tells us that, “with God, all things are possible.” So if God is for us, who cares about the odds against us?

Linda Hansen
Salem, Oregon, congregation

Share Your Treasures!

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

Feast Goers Welcome in Sri Lanka & India!

If you have not yet finalized your Feast plans, your brothers and sisters in India and Sri Lanka are eagerly waiting to welcome international family members to join them in celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles!

The recent changes in the church did not afford advanced planning of the Festival, but recently the Feast sites for both countries were finalized!

Sri Lanka

Approximately 20-25 Sri Lankan brethren will be meeting together at the Mermaid Club and Hotel Kalutara near Beruwala, Sri Lanka. The hotel is located amid a vast garden of coconut palms on the golden sands of Mahawaskuduwa, a cozy fishing village. The cost of the hotel is approximately US$105 for a double occupancy room, which includes three buffet meals per day. This will be the first Feast that many of the Indian brethren have ever kept together, and they are excited to share this Feast with brothers and sisters from around the world! Services will be primarily in English with translation into the Hindi language for some of the local brethren.

A visit to India will be a life-changing experience. As a developing nation it is a land of many contrasts. Agra is the home of the world famous Taj Mahal—one of the seven wonders of the world. A trip to India will leave you with an earnest desire to see God’s Kingdom come for the many poor and impoverished people you will see. But it will also be a spiritually uplifting experience to meet your brothers and sisters who seek to learn more about the plan of God and with all their hearts want to share this glorious truth and gospel of the Kingdom of God with their fellow countrymen.

If you are interested in celebrating the Feast with your Sri Lankan or Indian brothers and sisters please call David Schreiber at (507) 377-8151 or e-mail him at David_Schreiber@ucg.org for more information or to make hotel reservations in Sri Lanka or India.

If you want to travel internationally and you earnestly seek to serve your brothers and sisters in Christ in any of the international sites around the world, please refer to the 2011 Festival Planning Brochure for more information. You can make a difference by sharing your time, talent and love with brothers and sisters in international areas. And of course we seek and appreciate your earnest prayers for God’s blessing on all the Feasts around the world where He has chosen to place His name. UN
My wife and I recently spent two amazing weeks visiting the churches and brethren in Sri Lanka and India (April 15 to May 1). Our journey followed the path made previously by fellow elder in Christ Ken Murray from Australia.

When Mr. Murray and I heard the brethren were temporarily without a pastor, we volunteered to visit and encourage God’s people there. What we experienced was much more than us encouraging them, but we ourselves were deeply moved, inspired and humbled by the many brethren we traveled to see.

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, we visited over 25 brethren. Many have been part of the Body of Christ for less than 10 years. They were feeling alone, and their once-peaceful and loving group was unsettled and beginning to divide. They asked many questions, but their main concern was that the doctrines of God not be watered down, particularly the Sabbath. Living in a country of Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic traditions, they have sacrificed much to obey the one true God and keep His Sabbaths Holy.

India

In India, we saw the same unrest among the brethren, but also a strong belief that the church should not be divided. They did not want to leave the church and follow a man. Some feared that, after losing their long time friend and pastor, no one would come to visit them. One man’s wife said with faith, “God will send someone to us, I will not follow a man.”

We visited many brethren in Sri Lanka and India in their homes. Some have modest and humble dwellings and lack many of the “necessities” that church members in other countries take for granted. Though having little, they are rich beyond measure. Their desire to learn more about God’s way of life is heart-warming. In order for some of our members in Sri Lanka and India to attend church, some take up to three crowded and non-air-conditioned buses one after another.

Sabbaths they hope to have enough bus or taxi fare money. This is common to these zealous brethren, and we were inspired by their faithfulness.

India is a large and poor nation. In the 70s and 80s, there were many large churches among God’s people, but now the brethren are scattered and only a few meet together each Sabbath. In Agra we spent the Last Day of Unleavened Bread with 24 lovely brethren. After services we stayed to answer their questions and later visited many in their homes. Our travels then took us to visit other faithful brethren living in the cities of Hyderabad and Bangalore.

G.P. Samuel

We heard of a group of about 42 Sabbath keepers in Chirala, India. This group invited us to visit them, and when we arrived at their church building we were surrounded by men, women and children enthusiastically greeting us. They directed our entire party, consisting of Prakash and Sarah Mandora (our translators), Jamie Schreiber, my wife Jolinda and me to the front row to welcome and present us with fresh flower leis.

Words can not express the experience we had with these people. They observe the Sabbath and some of the Holy Days. They carry the name “Church of God.” Their pastor’s name is G.P. Samuel. He is 75 years of age. He began Sabbath observance in 1964 and began teaching his family and others what he had learned from the Scriptures. In 1982

the congregation built a building for services and Bible studies. He’s had much zeal to search out the truth from the Bible. He had read material from many churches and found their teachings were in conflict with the Bible. I’m unsure when he began reading United Church of God literature, but he’s read many of our booklets and completed the Bible Study Course.

In our discussions with members in Chirala, it is surprising how many common beliefs we share. Besides their understanding of the Sabbath day, they do not observe Easter or Christmas. They understand God’s food laws and believe the Kingdom of God is coming to this earth. They have felt alone for many years and wondered if there were other followers of the Scriptures in India.

We visited each member in their homes. Some homes were not much more than a hut, but still they insisted that we come in, sit and have a cup of tea. Some asked questions, some asked for our prayers for a specific problem and some requested anointing. We were overwhelmed by the love and hospitality they showed us. During one of the Bible studies I spoke on the Kingdom of God. As I was reading in Isaiah, one of the young girls sitting next to my wife giggled and said, “Oh I can’t wait for the Kingdom to come!”

Please join us in praying for our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka and India. They are a gracious and loving people and would love to receive letters from you and, if possible, to have you join them at the Feast of Tabernacles. There will be a Feast site this year held in Sri Lanka at the Hotel Mermaid, Beruwala. In India the Feast will be held at the Jaypee Hotel in Agra. Your brothers and sisters in India and Sri Lanka would love to spend God’s Feast with you this year! For more information about the Feast or sending letters to the brethren in India and Sri Lanka, please contact Dave Schreiber by phone at (507) 377-8151 or by e-mail at David_Schreiber@ucg.org.
From Disciple Simon to Apostle Peter—an Amazing Transformation

When Peter received the Holy Spirit, he was obviously converted. But reading the first 15 chapters of Acts and Peter's two epistles reveals a remarkably different man. If Peter could change that much, then we, too, can experience significant growth.

by Don Hooser

Most of us find Peter to be likable and lovable from the moment we are first introduced to him. He definitely had his natural strengths. He was outgoing, gregarious, transparent and enthusiastic. Most important of all, he loved Christ.

Because of being impulsive and strong-willed, his faults were also quite obvious. That’s what enables us to see such a contrast after he was converted. Because of that contrast, Peter’s example and writings are a great inspiration.

Unstable, Impulsive and Insecure Simon

Simon was anything but a rock. He wasn’t dependable the way a Christian leader needs to be. Without God’s Spirit, he often spoke or acted in a way that would be inappropriate for a Christian. His actions belied an underlying insecurity in spite of his outward confidence.

Think of some of his impulsive actions: In Capernaum Peter invited Jesus and the disciples to his house even though his wife’s mother was sick in bed (Mark 1:29-30). When Peter saw Jesus walking on water, he said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water” (Matthew 14:28). He impulsively tried to kill the servant of the high priest (John 18:10). When Christ appeared to Peter and some of the other disciples when they were fishing on the Sea of Tiberius, Peter “put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea” (John 21:7, emphasis added throughout).

All four Gospels tell of Peter’s shameful denial of Jesus. The main reason for this emphasis is probably to reassure us that God will forgive even the worst of sins. But it also shows Peter’s fear, cowardice and lack of commitment at times. He even “began to curse and swear,” perhaps relapsing into habits from his earlier life (Matthew 26:73-74).

Simon Peter was not yet a rock of steadfastness and godly character. The process of conversion isn’t completed at baptism. We see evidence of Peter’s further growth long after he received the Holy Spirit. Consider how Peter shrank back from eating with gentiles when men from the Jerusalem church were present—and this was many years after his conversion (Galatians 2:11-13). However, much to Peter’s credit, he evidently took Paul’s correction well and repented of that.

With all of Peter’s strengths and abilities, it seems a little odd that he would have some underlying insecurity. But character traits are largely formed by experiences in childhood, and who knows what Peter’s childhood was like.

Bold Simon

Peter is known for being bold, spontaneous and impulsive, but without knowing more about his background, it is impossible to know what caused him to be that way.

Peter was outspoken, which can be both good and bad. When Jesus asked His disciples, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter immediately and emphatically stated, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:15-16). Jesus was clearly pleased with Peter’s understanding and reverence. It could be that Jesus’ compliment went to Peter’s head, but we cannot know with certainty.

Right after that, Jesus described His upcoming death and the events that would lead up to that. “Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’” (verse 22). Peter apparently took hold of Jesus, nudged Him to one side and began to correct Him sternly! This was audacious, presumptuous and foolish.

Then Jesus “turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men’” (verse 23). Shortly after Jesus had praised Peter He gave him a stern reprimand, calling him “Satan”! That’s because Peter began relying on human reasoning and was speaking in opposition to God’s divine plan.

In the Garden of Gethsemane before Jesus was arrested, He told His disciples that all of them...
would “stumble” and be “scattered.” “Peter answered and said [bragged] to Him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble’” (Matthew 26:33).

Ah, “let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). Peter was undoubtedly sincere, but any unconverted person is blind to his own weaknesses.

Presumptuous Simon

The next chapter tells about the transfiguration of Jesus that Peter, James and John were invited to witness. “And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’” (Matthew 17:3-4a).

Peter, the compulsive talker, interrupted the discussion between Jesus, Moses and Elijah, and “answered”—even though no one had asked him anything or invited him to speak! First he made a trite comment and then went on to offer his advice.

“While he [Peter] was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’” (verse 5). Perhaps Peter learned to be less quick to assume he understood the spiritual implications of a given circumstance.

Solid Rocklike Peter

Simon’s unconverted character was unaffectingly less stable than his converted nature. But in spite of Simon’s impulsive-ness and inconsistencies, Jesus prophetically named him for what, by God’s grace, he would become. After Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, “when Jesus looked at him, he would become. After Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, “when Jesus looked at him, He said, ‘You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas’ (which is translated, ‘A Stone’)” (John 1:42). Cephas is Aramaic, and Peter is Greek.

Peter became a rock-solid pillar in the Church and part of its foundation. Peter’s first recorded sermon is related in Acts 1:15-22. Already we see an added dimension of sobriety, maturity, wisdom, and knowledge of Scripture, clearly inspired by God’s Holy Spirit. With his second sermon in Acts 2, we see a mighty preacher of the gospel giving a focused and powerful masterpiece of a sermon.

Acts 3:1 tells us that “Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer.” That shows a willingness to go where the people were, as Jesus had instructed Peter to do.

When Peter and John were arrested, they were inspired and fearless in their testimony because they were “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). The officers “saw the boldness of Peter and John” and marveled (verse 13).

Humble Peter

Peter went through the most humbling experience imaginable. He well understood the gravity of having forsaken and even denied Jesus Christ. He had “wept bitterly” (Luke 22:62). All of us have let Christ down many times, although in less dramatic ways.

So it was a very emotional time when Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” (John 21:15-17). Each time Peter answered in the affirmative, and Jesus responded with, “Feed My lambs… Tend My sheep… Feed My sheep.” That’s a sobering message Jesus meant for all of us.

After Pentecost, Peter was no longer self-centered and vain. He sought to do all to the glory of God. When Peter healed the lame man at the temple and a crowd gathered in amazement, Peter said to them, “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” (Acts 3:12). He let them know it was by the power and name of Jesus Christ (verses 13-16).

Peter wrote, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’” (1 Peter 5:5-6).

Peter begins his second epistle with “Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ” and speaks of Jesus as “our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1).

Peter’s humility and loving-kindness are evident all through his two epistles. Spiritual humility is indicated by regular reliance on prayer. Acts 3:1; 4:31; 6:4; and 10:9 are examples of Peter’s devotion to prayer.

Respectful and Submissive Peter

Who would have thought that Simon—independent, self-willed, strong-willed, presumptuous, brash and bragging Simon—would become a role model of a humble servant-leader, having a shepherd’s heart? But all that we read of Peter in the book of Acts shows him to be that humble, dedicated example. His two epistles are filled with beautiful instruction on how to live the Spirit-filled life.

Peter makes it clear that what motivates and empowers us is the “living hope” of the resurrection of Jesus Christ that Peter described this a continuation of his theme of submission. A loving, self-sacrificing husband will suppress his natural selfish inclinations and put first the needs and desires of his wife.

The next section begins with “finally,” which indicates this is the peak of his theme, plus it amplifies the theme to the larger beautiful picture.

“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love as brothers, sympathize with one another, and show mercy to one another; because you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.” (1 Peter 1:10-11).

In chapter 5, Peter reminds elders that they are to be good shepherds to “the flock of God,” as we will give account to “the Chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:1-4). Then Peter writes, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’” Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:5-6).

Disciple Simon Became the Apostle Peter

Yes, who would have expected Simon to become a primary example of rock-solid conversion, truly living up to his new name Peter? Who would have expected Simon to become one of the world’s greatest teachers of love, hope, humility and respect for and submission to authority?

Spiritual conversion requires the greatest miracle of all, but God’s Word is reassuring. If people like Peter and Paul could become deeply converted, then we know there is hope for all of us.

Don Hooser is an elder serving in the Dallas and Sherman, TX, congregations.
What In The World Do I Do Now?

■ You just graduated from college.

Now what?
by Mitchell Moss

You may be looking around at classmates who have lots going on—they’ve lined up internships, they’re going to job fairs, they’ve got interviews, they’re meeting with recruiters, they’re joining the trade magazine mailing lists.

But you’ve got much less going on than that. You went to one job fair recently. You’ve flipped through trade magazines once or twice. And that’s about it. Your lack of progress, compared with the amazing progress your classmates are making, is starting to fill you with anxiety about the future.

What on earth do you do next?

Read on for inspiration. I faced this very conundrum and managed to not become homeless. You can, too!

You’re not alone

First, some encouragement. You’re not the first one to graduate and wonder what in the world to do. Many others have found themselves in this situation (including me) and most of them continued living, breathing, and having a life worth living. The fact that you haven’t got so much going on as your classmates do doesn’t mean you’re doomed—it just means that you need a kick from behind to get things going.

What to do

1. Do work.

That phrase means exactly what it says. Why do your friends have so much going on? For most of them, it’s because they made those things happen. They do work. Sure, some may have a leg up because of who their father is or who their neighbors are, but not for all of them. If you want to have lots going on, you’ve got to make things happen. Solomon wrote, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might” (Ecclesiastes 9:10, NIV). That implies that your hands have to find something to do first.

One huge asset in making things happen is your student advisor. They are usually very connected in the community and know lots of avenues for moving forward. Your advisor is usually well-known in the industry you picked as a major. They say that getting a job is “opening doors and closing doors.” Usually they’re referring to times when it becomes obvious that God wants something specific to happen or not happen. But a lot of the time, it’s not clear that God has a preference either way. That’s called free will, and you’ve already made use of it by choosing to study the Bible or pray (or meditating—don’t forget about that!), then the faith principle comes into play—do work. Pick your time every day to study and pray, then do that every single day. Nobody else will do it for you or can do it for you.

So, once you’re praying and studying everyday, what do you pray about?

Pray to God and ask Him to show you the right path.

In other words, His will. This is such a big deal that Jesus put it right there in the model prayer—“Your will be done” (Matthew 6:10). When Jesus said, “Your will be done,” He didn’t just mean on some global, macro scale. He also meant for God’s will to be done for you, individually, in your everyday life. And He didn’t just mean in some nebulous vague, unspecified way. He meant for you to be a specific part of that will. Jesus said, “For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:50).

So what you’re asking is for God to show you His will for you. It means that you can make things happen. Also, you should also remember that it is not wrong to ask God to bless you. The apostle James said, “…yet you have not because you ask not” (James 4:2). Ask with the faith that your Heavenly Father desires to give you good things.

Now, a disclaimer: God won’t always show you exactly what to do. If you want to have lots going on, you’ve got to make things happen. But that doesn’t mean you’re doomed—it just means that you need a kick from behind to get things going.

Sometimes God just lets you choose what you want. This may be one of those times, so if it doesn’t become painfully obvious what to do, just keep on keeping on. Make more things happen.

If all else fails, go to ABC

That subhead sounds like a joke, but it’s actually serious. Ambassador Bible Center, sponsored by the United Church of God, an International Association, is fantastic and I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention how awesome it is and how glad I am that I attended it after my college graduation. My spiritual maturity grew leaps and bounds because I attended ABC.

If I may make this advice column personal, let me tell you specifically how things worked out for me. After college, I went to ABC (which I had been planning to do since beginning college). After ABC, I looked for jobs and did exactly what I just told you to do. I eventually got two part-time jobs right after the Feast. I really hoped one of them would make me full-time, and they told me they really were working to make that happen. I found out about the job I’m doing now (editing this newspaper you hold in your hands) and applied, but still felt like the part-time job I was working would be better for me. I prayed that God make it clear which one He wanted me to have if He had a preference. If He didn’t have a preference, I asked that my part-time employers hire me full-time.

When they offered me the position at the home office, I asked my other employer if they could offer me anything. They said that there just wasn’t enough work yet to make me an offer. The whole time they were telling me this, I was smiling, because God had made it clear. My prayer was answered.

So if you’re beginning to feel that anxiety that wells up from the pit of your stomach because you haven’t figured out what you do next, remember, you’re not alone. After you remember that, then start making things happen. But follow through all the while with continuous prayer, leaning on God and Jesus Christ. In short, work as if everything depends on you and pray as if everything depends on God.
Opportunity Knocks

When an opportunity comes, seize it immediately. It usually does not come back around again.

by Arthur Suckling

Rahm Emmanuel once said, “You should never let a good crisis go to waste.” Despite the fact that I don’t particularly resonate with the man, there is a nugget of truth contained in that idea. I would say it slightly differently. “You should never let a good opportunity go to waste.”

Something happened just recently in the Loveland, Denver, Colorado Springs, and Frisco, Colorado, congregations. Like many areas, we experienced the departure of the pastor. There was no pastor to take his place, and the seven elders got together to discuss, “What do we do now?”

What was so refreshing was that no one said, “I’m in charge,” or, “This is what we will do.” Rather, there was a calm combined with peace and a desire to simply take care of what needed to be done. We volunteered with the attitude to give way to another if anyone else wanted to do it, or we joined forces and shared the responsibility. Out of this “crisis” arose some new and open thinking.

I don’t know who suggested it, and it does not matter who did. The ideas grew and burst forth based on their own merit. Someone recommended that we ask the male brethren in the church if they would like to have a speaking seminar. The purpose of this seminar was to prepare them to present sermonettes in the four local churches.

A seminar is to state clearly with evidence what is believed. It is to put the Bible into words and into clear form to help the less educated, the less organized, and the less experienced brethren in their studies. A seminar is to train the brethren to use the Bible, that Word which is God’s Book, as God’s written Word. A seminar is to give the early Christian Brethren a sense of the hope God has given to them as the church of the living God. A seminar is to train the brethren in a practical way so that they may be able to understand God’s written Word and to use it in the experience of life.

Mr. Fiaboe invited Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Scruggs to come and speak. They were delighted. As a result of the trip, the two Togo congregations and the Benin congregation will use their native languages for translation, meaning a much higher level of service from UCG ministry. And there is a member to translate the congregations in those countries. If the translation problem can be solved, these two countries can also be served as part of a wider West African region. This will save the church money and enable the United Church of God to serve the people of each country with more frequent ministerial visits.

Nigerian elder Oludare Akinbo also spoke at the GCE and related that, in Nigeria, a West African nation of 150 million people, no members have left the United Church of God. The church has been trying to get Mr. Akinbo into the U.S. to attend a GCE for some years. This was the first time he had been able to make a visa to visit the United States.

As aresult of the trip, the two Togo congregations and the Benin congregation will use their native languages for translation instead of French, meaning a much higher level of service from UCG ministry.

Opportunity Knocks Continued

As a result of the trip, Mr. Fiaboe informed Mr. Rhodes that, after discussion, the Togolese brethren had decided to remain in United. Mr. Rhodes had left behind recordings of four sermonettes, which the brethren had listened to. They found no hint of a change of doctrine in any of them, which assured them we were not changing doctrine—something they had been told. They also heard the sermon on Christ-like service as a reason for remaining in UCG. They were excited about the new emphasis on serving. The teens in Togo now have the opportunity to attend summer camp in Nigeria and the members in Togo will continue to have their meetings, once each month!

We see much potential growth on the horizon. This after only two months! We are thrilled—it was like being newly baptized for the weekly Sabbath. For example, by the time of the Feast of Tabernacles in 2008, Zimbabwe brethren were confronted with starvation. Conditions are better now for the brethren in Zimbabwe, and by Passover, churches in Southern Africa were stabilizing.

After Mr. Rhodes officiated at Passover in Johannesburg this year, he flew immediately to Kadoma, a small town south of Harare, Zimbabwe, where he rented a large house for Passover, night to be observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread. It enabled all the brethren from the entire country to be together as never before, greatly strengthening them. It only cost $1,000 to bring everybody to one location and house and feed them there instead of the minister having to travel to all the scattered brethren through the immense geography at much greater expense. Mr. Rhodes made the commitment to do this two or three times a year, greatly inspiring the brethren! The church looks forward to much greater spiritual strength and inspiration as time continues to develop, in the world. opportunity knocks, and opportunities can’t be taken over.

God expects us to develop our abilities in whatever areas they may lie. Let’s roll! UN

from English to French in Cameroon. Speaking for the congregation, Mr. Fiaboe appreciated the message and openness of Mr. Rhodes, saying the congregation would meet together and give a final decision about remaining in United. Mr. Fiaboe invited Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Scruggs to his home and later took them to the airport where they boarded flights to the United States Saturday night.

A few weeks later, Mr. Fiaboe wrote and informed Mr. Rhodes that, after discussion, the Togolese brethren had decided to remain in United. Mr. Rhodes had left behind recordings of four sermonettes, which the brethren had listened to. They found no hint of a change of doctrine in any of them, which assured them we were not changing doctrine—something they had been told. They also heard the sermon on Christ-like service as a reason for remaining in UCG. They were excited about the new emphasis on serving. The teens in Togo now have the opportunity to attend summer camp in Nigeria and the members in Togo will continue to have their meetings, once each month!

As a result of the trip, the two Togo congregations and the Benin congregation will use their native languages for translation instead of French, meaning a much higher level of service from UCG ministry.
Orlando congregation welcomes four new members

The Orlando congregation is excited to have four newly-baptized members in the Church family! Roger and Joyce Davis, Rejean Dion and Bessie Harris attend church in Orlando and were all baptized during the month preceding Passover. The congregation is pleased to see this growth and looks forward to more as God calls people into His body.

Tammy Johnson

Ladies’ Night Concludes the Bay Area Speaker’s Club Year

As the 2010-2011 Bay Area speakers’ club year drew to a close, 52 members and guests at the year’s final meeting (which was also ladies’ night) shared a delicious meal and great fellowship. Ladies’ night continues the tradition of the club’s members hosting a dinner meeting to thank wives and friends for their support throughout the club year. The April 23 event at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Union City, began as the Sabbath was drawing to a close during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Mark Mirigian, speakers’ club president, banged the gavel and called the meeting to order welcoming the evening’s guests. Mr. Mirigian conducted the initial segments of club and then introduced the topics master, Steve Thompson. The topics generated a wide variety of responses from the audience. The second half was coordinated by the toast master, Mark Philip Pebworth, who introduced the speaking portion of the club.

The evening’s business, topics and speaking sessions were clear evidence of the growth in the speakers and in the club as a whole. The ladies brought an increased energy to the topics session and the men prepared diligently for special guests. Club director Jim Tuck noted how much growth and improvement had been realized over the club season of seven sessions. It was also encouraging to see the poise and ability of the younger men in handling their assignments. It shows God is working with all ages to provide capable leaders for the Church in the future. Perhaps more importantly, the evening brought into focus the strengthening of bonds of friendship and camaraderie among club members.

Of the evening’s five speakers, James Goss was recognized as the most improved speaker and Marc Cebrian as the most effective speaker. Neil Boyington was recognized as the most helpful evaluator. Overall, it was a dynamic evening of enjoyment, encouragement and growth as everyone worked together to bring out each other’s best.

Mark Mirigian

Columbus, Ohio, Church Hosts First Annual Midwest Teen Prom

The Columbus, Ohio, congregation of the United Church of God hosted the Midwest Teen Prom on Saturday, April 30, 2011, at the new Embassy Suites (Airport) in Columbus. The weekend began with Sabbath services, which had more than 250 in attendance. There were people from six different states. It was especially exciting to learn that 17 teens traveled from the Wisconsin/Minnesota areas.

In lieu of a sermonette, there was a vocal solo by Emily Timmons of Portsmouth, Ohio; two piano, guitar and vocal selections by Marc Eddington and Garrett Fenchel of Cincinnati, Ohio; and two teen choir selections by the Columbus teen choir directed by Nancy Earls and accompanied by Dottie Seifert on the piano, Ryan Shallenberger on the guitar and Julie Waterhouse on the cello.

Pastor and Beyond Today television presenter Steve Myers gave the sermon. Mr. Myers spoke about “Spiritual Apps”—apps (applications) that will help you have a relationship with God.

After relaxing in the luxurious rooms, the teens had a promenade through the hotel lobby area in their stunning prom attire. The parents and families watched as a special recognition and a slide show was given for the 13 graduating seniors in attendance at this year’s prom. The seniors received a nice certificate and a gift.

A lovely, sit-down dinner was followed by the prom itself beginning at sundown. Andrew Shallenberger of Columbus served as the DJ. The 106 teens at the prom seemed to dance all evening. It was rare to see anyone seated at all.

The next morning the prom attendees had a delicious Embassy Suites breakfast followed by a pool party. Saying goodbye was difficult, but many made plans to keep in touch with their old and new friends and to see them at summer camps.

The Columbus church was happy to hear from the Embassy Suites that this was the best-behaved group of teens they had hosted. They did not know what to expect from more than 100 teens. Of course, we knew they would be awesome and shining brightly.

“It’s just the best feeling to get to dressed up and be with friends for a night without worries: just good times, good friends, and great dancing!” This is how Emily Gunn of Columbus, Ohio, expressed her feelings about the first annual Midwest Teen Prom. The teens and parents both agreed it was a big success.

Mark Miller of the Cambridge, Ohio, congregation said, “This was an evening of fun. I especially enjoyed the dance and just being with friends. I can’t wait to come back next year.”

Amanda Burnhauser, of the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, congregation said, “I thought the prom this year was the best so far. It really was an amazing weekend.”

The people, the music, the activities and location were all perfect. I really liked how they played more modern music. The Embassy Suites was a really great environment to have a prom. Overall, it was an awesome prom weekend.”

Bev Galli

The high school graduates of the year 2011 pose for a photo at the Midwest Teen Prom in Columbus, Ohio.
### Announcements

#### Births

Chris and Elesha Stewart are blessed to announce the birth of their first child, Carson Otto Stewart, born at 12:06 a.m. on March 12, 2011. He weighed 9 lb. 15 oz.

#### Engagements

Brian and Kristin Krueger of Seattle, Washington, are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Rebekah Krueger of New York City, New York, to Danny Dance of Nashville, Tennessee. Danny is the son of Allen and Pam Dance of Chattanooga, Tennessee. A September wedding in San Diego, California, is being planned.

#### Obituaries

Leon A. Roeth, 64, of Arcanum, Ohio, died November 16, 2010, at his residence.

He was born December 19, 1945, to Arthur and Winifred Roeth. He married Paula J. Shaffner on August 20, 1970, in New York, to Danny Dance of Nash-...
learned about balancing priorities and needs as she serves her family, the brethren and her business’s clients.

DeLee Hargrove was the next speaker. She is the wife of Vernon Hargrove, pastor of the Columbus and Cambridge, Ohio, congregations. Vernon and DeLee retired in 2009, but were willing to return to full-time pastoring in order to serve the needs of God’s people. DeLee shared a few of the many lessons she has learned over the past 49 years of service—especially ways she has supported her husband as he handled the demands of pastoring. Along with these responsibilities, DeLee is the mother of two grown sons and is a grandmother.

The final speaker was Ruth Root, who serves as the office manager of United Church of God, Australia, located in Burleigh Heads, Queensland, just south of Brisbane. With a PowerPoint presentation, Ruth introduced the office staff and shared specific ways God has answered her prayers when needs arose regarding being able to do His work in this area of the world. Ruth also has grown children and a grandchild. She is fully involved in the day-to-day operation of the work of the Church in Australia and is profoundly thankful for that opportunity.

These three presentations were followed by discussion regarding how each elder’s wife can uniquely contribute based on her personal circumstances, gifts and abilities. Challenges such as family, health and individual talents were also some of the topics in the discussion period.

The session ended with a resolve to lovingly support and serve one another as we go forward doing the work of God. LeeAnn Luker

Pastors Training Program Trains Twenty-Four Elders

Twenty-four new pastors came to the home office on May 11 and 12 for the Annual ABC Intensive, two-day training to learn the essentials of their new jobs. Two new pastors were from Latin America: Jaime Gallardo from Chile and Israel Robledo from Guatemala. This training session preceded the General Conference of Elders meetings, which started on Sunday, May 13.

The new pastors were quite varied in age and experience—those coming out of retirement to assume oversight of three or four churches, new hires from our local elder pool who have been serving in their churches for years and volunteer pastors who are caring for churches while we determine how we can staff them with permanent pastors.

I was so pleased and refreshed with the optimistic and energetic spirit to really care for churches! Most questions had to do with the relevant aspects of how to care for people, which included counseling, sermon subjects and content, conducting various ceremonies, organizing social activities, conflict resolution and much more. In one of our evening question and answer sessions, the one-and-a-half-hour discussion was completely about our outreach and preaching the Gospel.

President Dennis Luker opened the first day by speaking about the high calling of the ministry and the heart of a pastor. Then Roy Holladay gave a presentation about conducting various ceremonies such as weddings, funerals and baptisms.

We then had a longer session about the various administrative responsibilities of the pastor, which included reporting, expenses, handling assistance and other necessary forms. During the lunch hour LeeAnn Luker met separately with the women for a special discussion.

After lunch, Roy Holladay talked about duties and speaking at the Feast of Tabernacles. This year there will definitely be more speaking opportunities for all pastors. Mr. and Mrs. Luker spoke about the pastor’s marriage and its challenges.

At the end of the first day’s regularly scheduled sessions, Gary Antion spoke to the group about counseling basics.

The second day began with Mr. Holladay going through the ministerial qualifications and practical principles from Timothy and Titus.

In two sessions for more than three hours Dr. Don Ward, Jerry Aust and Randy Stiver spoke about the principles of preaching. Then Mr. Antion covered most of the common counseling issues—that of pre-marital and baptism counseling. The day ended with Mr. Holladay and Victor Kubik speaking about maintaining spiritual health and not letting ourselves be over-run by our duties.

All of us agreed that we gained much not only by what was taught, but by the fellowship we had with one another. We look positively to our continuing to work together to serve our brethren.

Victor Kubik

Home Office Welcomes Jacob Trone to the Staff

The home office staff is pleased to welcome Jacob Trone to the team. Mr. Trone has been working with Treasurer Aaron Dean in the Financial Services Department. His job duties include helping Mr. Dean with accounting work and helping Gerald Seelig with accounts payable. This summer he will take over payroll and reimbursement of ministerial expenses.

New UCG employee Jacob Trone

Mr. Trone grew up in Auburn, California, where he lived until moving to Cincinnati, Ohio. He has two siblings: his brother, Joe, also works in accounting in Sacramento and his sister, Jessica, is a nurse in San Diego. His father, Drew Trone, is a deacon in the Sacramento congregation and his mother, Lydia, is a deaconess there. He has nine other extended family members who attend the Sacramento congregation.

After high school, he went to Sierra College in Rocklin, California, where he received an AA degree in accounting in 2007. He later went on to graduate from California State University Sacramento in May 2010 with a bachelor’s degree in accounting with honors.

Mr. Trone will surely use his education and talents in serving the church. “I am most looking forward to getting experience in my major of accounting and in helping the church. It is a great opportunity for me to not only do the type of work that I enjoy doing, but also to be working with people of like mind,” he said.

The home office staff and UCG community extends a warm welcome to Jacob Trone!

Sabrina Clore

ABC Class of 2011 Graduates

Sunday, May 22, marked the conclusion of the 12th year of Ambassador Bible Center. Many of the 24 graduates are now on their way home or packing to depart from Cincinnati. And what a year it has been!

The final week was filled with activities. The General Conference of Elders members were in Cincinnati for the Sabbath of May 14. That evening, the entertainment for the elders was put on by the ABC Class of 2011. They performed several of the numbers from the Charity Auction and the chorale completed the evening with two of the songs that they sang in seven different church areas this year. At the conclusion of the evening, Brent Martin, the MC, asked if anyone wished to contribute to the Zimbabwe Education Fund. The fund was supported earlier by the ABC charity auction. To our pleasant surprise, the elders donated over $780, bringing the total amount for the Charity event to over $6,000.

Sunday was an opportunity for students to view the General Conference of Elders as they conducted their business and had various reports. On Monday, several of the students spent one final activity day together at King’s Island. Tuesday through Thursday were the final days of classes. On Thursday, instructors Stiver, Myers and Antion bid the student a short farewell in messages at student assembly and presented them with
Sharkey, the Ambassador Excellence through the sound system as Eileen played “Pomp and Circumstance” 1 p.m ceremony. Peter Eddington with beautiful floral pieces. ni to prepare and decorate the hall tirelessly with the aid of several alum- ni the decorations for graduation day. Activities at the home office as Terri used and how we need to have those examples of how salt was out several examples of how salt was used and how we need to have those same characteristics or qualities. Saturday evening saw a flurry of activities at the home office as Terri Eddington and Lisa Fenchel prepared the decorations for graduation day. Jorge and Kathy de Campos worked tirelessly with the aid of several alumi to prepare and decorate the hall with beautiful floral pieces.

Sunday was graduation day. Around 180 family members, friends, home office staff, instructors, alumni and the Class of 2011 gathered for the 1 p.m. ceremony. Peter Eddington played “Pomp and Circumstance” through the sound system as Eileen Sharkey, the Ambassador Excellence for the Class of 2011. There will be guest speakers from outside the region and several local speakers during the course of the weekend. There will be a bonfire with a generational discussion including ladies from all the past decades on interesting topics. Sabbath services will be held at the lodge.

For more information and to find a registration form, visit denver.ucg.org. You can also call Beth Bradford at (303) 805-0089 or send her an e-mail at beth.bradford@comcast.net. We welcome all ladies who are able to come, and we look forward to having you!

Connie Ashley

Chattanooga Plans 2011 Ocoee Rafting Trip

The Chattanooga, Tennessee, congregation will be hosting the annual Ocoee white water rafting trip on Sunday, Aug. 7, at 10:00 a.m. As in prior years the church will be utilizing the services of Ocoee Inn Rafting as outfitters for the trip. Participants must be at least 12 years old (Tennessee law) and in good health. Those with bad backs or other similar injuries should not participate due to the strenuous and jarring nature of the activity. Due to the inherent risky activity, all participants must sign a liability waiver. Those under 18 will need a parent or legal guardian’s signature before they can participate.

We have reserved a block of rafting spots. In order to guarantee that you have a seat please send a signed liability waiver and a check payable to the United Church of God, Cleveland, for $28 per person by July 15th to the address below:

Allen Dance
9201 Cobblestone Hill Drive
Ooltewah, TN 37363

Please clearly identify each participant, church area and a phone number where you can be contacted. We must have your deposit to reserve you a spot so send it in as soon as possible. This activity takes place regardless of the weather. If you have any questions, please contact Allen Dance by phone at (423) 855-0868 or by e-mail at allen-dance@hotmail.com.

Camping and cabin facilities are available in the area. The church does not sponsor a group campsite, but individual families are welcome to take advantage of the opportunities to camp at their own risk if they so desire. The Chilhowee Recreation Area of the Cherokee National Forest is a 20-minute drive from the outfitters. Campsites are on a first come, first served basis and generally fill up on the weekends so early arrival is advised. There will be a camp Bible study on the Sabbath in the Chilhowee Recreation Area as in past years.

Roy Holladay

Correction: Last issue we published a lengthy description of the Garden Grove, California congregation’s annual weekend, the OC Bash. However, we did not publish any details. The event begins Thursday evening, July 14, with a meet and greet and concludes Sunday, July 17. For more details, visit the OC Bash website at www.ocbash.com.
**What’s New In MEDIA?**

- **UCG Web Presence Expands**
  On May 31, Internet manager Aaron Booth reported the following exciting stats for UCG Web activity:
  - 35,717 total Facebook fans.
  - 12,640 total Twitter followers.
  - 622 videos posted on YouTube.
  - 1,676,554 video views on YouTube.
  - 197 Bible FAQs posted.
  - 35,363 Bible FAQs views (Bible FAQ stats differ greatly from last month because of combining sites and using new analytics to measure traffic).
  - 396 e-mail campaigns (This Is the Way, UCG Weekly Update, GN Newsletter, WNP E-news) sent.
  - 569,286 clicks to our websites generated by e-mail campaigns.
  - 72,459 booklet downloads from Apple’s iBookstore.
  - 72,459 Bible FAQs posted.
  - 396 videos posted on YouTube.
  - 1,676,554 video views on YouTube.

- **Beyond Today Airing Schedule**
  - June 5-11: “God’s Roadmap” with presenter Steve Myers.

- **Writers: Send Us Your Bios!**
  Media and Communications Services has launched the new UCG.org site. On the new site we feature a bio page for each writer who has had an article printed in any of United’s publications (excluding announcements or “Local Church Updates”).

- **GCE Report: Internet Team Introduces New Website to Elders**
  Monday morning, May 16, Aaron Booth and Tom Disher gave a presentation in a plenary session to the General Conference of Elders highlighting the improvements, features and opportunities available with the new website. Afterward, many elders and their wives attended a break-out session, where the duo covered how each and every elder and Church member can leverage social networking sites as well as our own website to preach the gospel.

  With regard to social networking, they discussed how sharing links to UCG articles on Twitter and Facebook can increase awareness of our site and help drive new people there. With regard to the new UCG website, they showed how to create an account, write commentaries and blogs, and interact with non-Church visitors who may have questions on an article or video the church has produced.

**Featured Link**

- **Incredible India**
  http://tinyurl.com/ucg-india
  See the sites and people of India as seen by UCG elder David Schreiber and his wife on their trip to visit Church brethren during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Their son and home office employee, Jamie Schreiber, was along for the trip and captured footage from across the country of people on the street, sites in on the road and brethren in their homes and meeting places.

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**Attention Graduating COLLEGE Seniors**

**Send Us Your Bios!**

Congratulations! We would like to feature the 2010 college graduates in the August United News. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions and send a photograph by July 14, 2010.

1. Graduate’s Name
2. Parents’ Names
3. Congregation and Pastor’s Name
4. College Accomplishments
5. Church Activities/Hobbies/Interests (tell a little bit about yourself)
6. Plans After Graduation
7. Additional Comments (favorite quote, favorite scripture, motto, advice, etc. Please identify which it is, so we don’t think your advice is your motto, etc.)

Also include your phone number or e-mail address to use to confirm spellings, etc. (They will not be printed.) Please send with a recent photo (conforming with biblical standards of dress and hair length) of the graduate by July 14.

By e-mail to: Mitch_Moss@ucg.org
By mail to: United News, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027.

We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length; 250-word maximum length. Thanks!

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**Periodicals Postage Paid**

at Milford, Ohio, and at additional mailing offices.

**UNITED STATISTICS**

**Total Mail**

Year to Date 2011 vs. same period 2008-2010

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABC Continuing Education Seminar, Cincinnati, Ohio</td>
<td>June 6-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>June 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp Cotubic, Ohio</td>
<td>June 19-26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp Hye Sierra, California</td>
<td>July 3-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp Woodmen, Alabama</td>
<td>July 3-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>O.C. Bash, Southern California</td>
<td>July 15-17</td>
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<td>Little Rock, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee, 50th anniversary</td>
<td>July 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northwest Camp, Oregon</td>
<td>July 24-31</td>
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<td>Mountain Region Women’s Weekend, Allenspark, Colorado</td>
<td>July 29-31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp Pinecrest, Missouri</td>
<td>July 31-August 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ocoe Rafting Trip, Tennessee</td>
<td>August 7</td>
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