Good Works Program Being Launched

by Roy Holladay

The generosity and love of God’s people is inspiring to see. Many brethren are moved to want to help in material and financial ways when they become aware of needs and privations suffered by others in the faith.

The United Church of God has recently inaugurated a “Good Works Program,” approved by the Council of Elders Aug. 14, to help coordinate the many expressions of that love and desire to share and help. The purpose of this article is to explain the way the program will be administered. Tom Kirkpatrick has been appointed to coordinate the program. Questions can be directed to his attention.

What the Church Has Already Been Doing and Will Continue to Do

As background, it is important to understand that for years the Church has included considerations of member assistance in the course of establishing its annual budgets. Those responsible for coordinating the budgets in the various areas where members live (both internationally and in the United States) include requests for assistance to the brethren in the budgets that they submit to the home office. These are then considered by the Council of Elders, and finally by the General Conference of Elders. A fairly substantial amount of money has been budgeted and expended for years in various types of help—keeping the festivals, emergency personal assistance, etc. Also, as a part of the budget process, we estimate donations that will be received each year for the “International Fund” and the “Assistance Fund.” The end result of this is that most of the pressing needs of our brethren in all areas of the world have been met through budgeted allocations.

We very much appreciate the ongoing donations to the “Assistance Fund” and the “International Fund.” We anticipate that these donations will continue, and have budgeted accordingly. For those inclined to give donations to the “International Fund,” we request that

See “Good Works,” page 10

Fourth ABC Class Graduates

Recessional: Kathleen Giza, Cindy (Gore) Harper, Heather Guerin; right, award winners (flanked by presenters Roy Holladay and Clyde Klilough): Natalie and Craig McQueen, Linda Saar, Joshua Stevens and Cindy Harper by Janet Treadway

Parents, family and friends came from all over to take part in the graduation ceremony for the Ambassador Bible Center class of 2003. The activities began Sabbath, Aug. 9, with the ABC baccalaureate sermon given by President Roy Holladay.

Mr. Holladay talked about the “Reality of God,” pointing out that you can’t cheat reality. He gave the example of how many pilots, such as John Kennedy Jr., would be alive today if they had trusted their plane’s instruments instead of their feelings. “Reality is that your feelings cannot be

See “ABC,” page 15

44 Attend Second Annual Leadership Workshop

by Richard Pinelli

Ministerial Services hosted its second annual Leadership Workshop on the weekend of Aug. 28 to Sept. 1 for 44 invited guests from the local congregations all over the United States, Jamaica and Australia. The program was developed as a leadership seminar. The men and their wives had the opportunity in the five-day sessions to receive over 30 hours of instruction, interaction, testing and Q&A on topics such as: Role of the home office. Teaching as we have been taught. Finances and local congregations. Appreciating differences: understanding yourself and others. UCG congregational structure. Working with your pastor. Working with youth.

Back row: Nick and Sarah Slaughter, Lorinda and Jim Springer, Deborah and Rick Shabi, Mike Lewis, Leanne and David Holladay, Carol and Barry Dubkowski, Mark and Cheryl Wynaucht, Silvia and Joseph Slevin; second row: Bryan and Rhonda Waddle, Michael and Nancy Fike, Phil and Marlyse Sandlinds, Tim and Maryse Pembworth, Beth and Neil Hart, Jolinda and David Schreiber; in front of stage: Bill Palmer; Jon and Debbie Pinelli, Shaun and Rachel Venish, Dan and Roxanne Dowd, Paul and Sandra Fisher, Craig and Natalie McQueen, Matt and Diana Zoliner, Tim and Miranda Home, Lynn and Casie Lebby (photo by Janet Treadway)

• Selecting and developing preaching material.
• Leadership in the Church.
• The heart of a leader.

See “Leadership,” page 16

United Statistics

Bible Study Course Graduates, Cumulative

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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Council Sets Cash Reserve Policy, Approves Supplemental Hymnal and Much More

The Council of Elders approved a policy establishing the Church’s intent to maintain a minimum of 10 weeks cash reserve, approved the printing of a supplemental hymnal with 65 hymns, approved a good works program (see above) and much more at its meetings Aug. 8 to 14. After committee meetings Aug. 6 and 7, the Council spent most of Aug. 8 and 11 in executive session.

It is the practice of the Council to review its Code of Ethics at the first meeting of each fiscal year. Robert Dick, chair of the Ethics, Rules and Roles Committee, read the code in its entirety.

On Aug. 12, the Council’s first action was to confirm committee assignments for Tony Wasiukoff. By unanimous consent Mr. Wasiukoff was assigned to the Media and Communications, Strategic Planning and Finance and Doctrine committees.

It is a Council requirement for the president and operations managers to provide an annual report at the end of each fiscal year. The president gave an overview of home office efforts and the operation managers reported on the
“Council,” continued from page 1
focuses on the use of music in the Bible. This paper focuses on the use of music in the Bible. In its conclusion the statement recommends that we emphasize the worship aspect of music and not the entertainment aspect of music. However, applause is appropriate for entertainment and therefore applause is not appropriate for the special music because the service is for worshiping God, not for entertainment. He emphasized that the Church needs to teach the difference between the two. He also pointed out that the Bible makes a distinction between music and worship and music for entertainment. There is no biblical basis for prohibiting applause; however, since special music is part of our worship service, the Church requests that you refrain from applauding and offer any encouragement or appreciation in a personal manner.

A number of musicians and singers have stated a preference for no applause, wishing only to contribute to our worship service. To those who feel this way, it can be embarrassing to receive applause for their efforts.”

Council Discusses Policy on Applause for Special Music at the Feast

At the Council of Elders meeting Aug. 14, Jim Franks moderated a discussion on the subject of applause for special music at the Feast. He surveyed the Church pastors and the 45 who responded, 29 felt applause for special music was inappropriate, and 15 felt applause was appropriate policy as is. 12 were in favor of removing the policy and four had no opinion. Mr. Franks read comments from members and pastors on both sides of the question.

Ministers and members who were in favor of applause said that it shows the congregation's appreciation for the members of the congregation and is a way of joining the performer in praising God. They didn’t feel the applause was based on the entertainment value of the performance. They stated there is no scripture that says it is wrong to applaud and that denying it squelches the joy and inspiration it is intended to express. Those in favor felt that it is inappropriate for the nature of our service. Some mentioned that in our Western culture, applause is considered appropriate for entertainment, but not for worship. A number of musicians and singers wrote to the Council stating that they offer the music to God, not for applause, and that applause would make them feel uncomfortable.

Several said that it felt better to show our appreciation individually and personally to the musicians after services, rather than through applause. Experience shows that one difficulty with allowing applause is that a performance that isn’t quite as uplifting or stirring generates “polemical applause,” which is embarrassing to the performer and the audience because it indicates that the effect was below par. Without meaning to, it becomes a ratification of our own behaivors, validating our appreciation of the performers, while allowing us to exalt ourselves; we can be distracting from the worshipful purpose of special music.

Besides these comments, a special task force has just completed a paper on the subject of music in the Bible. This paper focuses on the use of music in the Bible. In its conclusion the statement recommends that we emphasize the worship aspect of music and not the entertainment aspect when preparing music for our services. Music can be used for both—worship and personally to the music performers have told him when more is better to show our appreciation individually and personally to the musicians after services, rather than through applause. Experience shows that one difficulty with allowing applause is that a performance that isn’t quite as uplifting or stirring generates “polemical applause,” which is embarrassing to the performer and the audience because it indicates that the effect was below par. Without meaning to, it becomes a ratification of our own behaviors, validating our appreciation of the performers, while allowing us to exalt ourselves; we can be distracting from the worshipful purpose of special music.

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President Gives Council 2002-2003 Year-End Review

UGCIA President Roy Holladay provided an overview of home office operations and accomplishments to the Council Aug. 12.

Budget
- Remained within expense budget for the 2002-2003 fiscal year. In fact, expenditures were $432,000 less than income, with fees added that amount to our operational reserves.
- Initiated discussion with the Council on the level of reserves to be maintained, and how to use excess funds.

Christ-Centered Servant Leadership
- As mandated by the Council, promoted CSL through regular instruction and discussion within the home office. This was done until the Council decided to do a review of CSL. Since that time, active promotion of CSL has been on hold.

Personnel
- Hired Aaron Booth as managing editor of our Web sites.
- Hired Clay Thornton as video producer and editor.
- Assigned Matthew Fenceal to coordinate the human resource responsibilities that are not covered by others.
- In cooperation with the ministry in the Philippines, assigned David Baker as senior pastor.
- Assigned John Elliott as senior pastor in Kenya.
- Worked with Clyde Kilough on the resolution of the difficulties in the United Kingdom. Peter Hawkins transferred there. Peter Hawkins transferred to England.
- Hired Khambani Banda to serve in Zambia.
- Hired Larry Perkins to sub for Ralph Inman in the mailing operation.
- Hired Barb Antion (prisoner mail) and Mary Pinelli (Ministerial Services) to work on call.
- Hired Clarisa de Campos to answer the Internet mail.
- Reclassified three employees who were classified as part-time and on call.

Yet had been working full-time. This affects their health benefits, time off, Feast time, 403(b) and other benefits.

Home Office
- Instituted regular meetings with the management team.
- Instituted Monday morning “Compass Check” session with a prayer for the week of the work.
- Asked that managers receive monthly financial reports of their operations to better manage expenditures.
- Completed purchase of adjacent property.
- Mailed letters to those newly baptized and those who officially want to be members of United.

The proposal includes a Web site with material continuously streaming, including full programs, specific topics from archives, one-to-two-minute commentary segments, commercials, etc.

The Council suggested several edits to the “Broadcast Television Media Strategy: Resolution and Media Report” and unanimously passed the resolution approving its implementation “dependent upon funds available and priorities of Church programs from year to year.” The resolution does not include a specific schedule, basing progress toward television programming on availability of budget.

Mr. Eddington then presented a five-year strategy to take The Good News to a print run of one million copies per issue.

He was not seeking Council approval of the plan, but wanted them to know what the department would like to accomplish and what it would take to get there. He emphasized that if specified goals were not achieved and to be aggressive funding. He also mentioned that even if it takes seven or eight years to accomplish, it would be a worthy goal to push the circulation to that level.

Education and Ministerial Services
- Richard Thompson, chair of the Education and Ministerial Services Committee, introduced to the Council a new policy statement titled “Sexual Misconduct Policy and Youth Protection Guidelines.” The policy is a formal statement of what has been the Church’s policy and practice on this subject. Mr. Thompson emphasized that it is very important that the field ministry become familiar with state laws regulating what is required if they suspect or become aware of sexual abuse.

Due to the importance of this subject, Mr. Thompson asked that Council members review the policy statement and said that there will be further discussions on the subject at the December meetings. He also suggested that Council members e-mail any questions or concerns to Church attorney, Larry Darden.

Doctrine
- Jim Franks, chair of the Doctrine Committee, led the Council through the final review of three study papers and received the following comments on the papers:

Mr. Franks pointed out that in 1995-1996, when United was first formed, a ministerial survey indicated the need for study papers on 20 subjects. Two of those original study paper subjects were among those reviewed today (“Tithing” and “The Resurrections”). The last of those original 20 doctrinal subjects (“The Nature of God and Christ”) should be ready for Council review at the December meetings, along with three other papers (“Music in the Bible,” “The Role of Women in the Bible” and “Voting and Running for Political Office”).

Other study papers under consideration are on the topics of the Hebrew calendar, focusing on the postponements, and a paper on the subject of sacred names. In addition, the Prophecy Advisory Committee is working on a number of papers they hope to present to the Doctrine Committee in the near future.

The Council had already received and reviewed the first three papers presented at today’s meeting. Mr. Franks walked the Council through a final review of papers titled “Ballooning” (which deals with the issue of voting within the Church) and “Tithing.” The Council unanimously approved both papers. He also briefly reviewed a paper titled “The Resurrec-

See “Council,” page 15

United Church of God, an International Association
United News September/October 2003 3

President Gives Council 2002-2003 Year-End Review

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See “Council,” page 15
Members Experience Joy and Challenges in Malaysia

by Florente Sliopan

The recent trip we made to Sabah (a part of the country of Malaysia on the island of Bornoe) to attend to the spiritual needs of our brethren there gave us mixed emotions of joy and challenges. We started our trip from Bacolod in the Philippines early in the morning of July 15 to catch the boat from Damugau to Zambonga. We arrived Damugau at about 10 a.m.

We bought our tickets and waited three hours for the boat to take us to Zambonga. Leaving Damugau at 1 p.m., we reached Zambonga the following morning without hitches. But the boat that was supposed to leave for Sabah in the afternoon had been rescheduled to the next day, so we were forced to spend another day in Zambonga.

The following day, July 17—after our passport was approved for travel by the immigration office—we sailed for Sandakan, Sabah. We reached the port of Sandakan the following day. After another processing of passports by Malaysian immigration, we journeyed to Semporna, a 335-kilometer (about 200-mile) land trip. We reached Semporna—the place where most of our brethren live—at 6 p.m., July 18, after four days of travel. We then made a stop at the home of Ruperta Betoy, which is along the highway about two kilometers from the town.

We were met by Mrs. Betoy, Artemio Bernal and Mercy Chu, the wife of Chu Von Cheok, a Chinese gentleman who is a prospective member. After formal greetings, we settled down to discuss a lot of things—from the present status of the Church, the home office, Council of Elders, the brethren in the Philippines and the remaining Feast days of God, including the Feast of Tabernacles this year.

The brethren asked if we could come back for the Feast of Trumpets or Atonement, but the subject of coming to the Feast of Tabernacles in the Philippines took more time in our discussion. After our dinner hosted by the Betoy family, Hope Betoy, one of the sons of Ruperta Betoy, brought us to a hotel in the town.

The following day (Sabath), our service was attended by 18 people including children. A number of people were not able to come on account of distance and other unknown reasons. In the morning, I gave the message in Cebuano, a dialect that all can understand. The title was, “They Choose to Follow Their Idols.”

Blessing the Children

Before and after our eating together that Sabbath, I noticed two of the small children trying to get my attention by always getting close to me, sometimes wanting to sit on my lap, distracting our discussions. I remembered the Bible incident where Jesus blessed the children who were trying to stay close to Him (Mark 10:13-16). I then opened the subject of the blessing of children and asked the parents if their children had already been blessed. They answered “no.”

In the afternoon, before our Bible study, we held the ceremony of the blessing of children. This ceremony is new to the brethren in Sabah as this was not done in their former church. They asked me to conduct the ceremony after I thoroughly explained this practice of the Church of God that was started by Jesus Christ, quoting the scriptures. There were five children, ages four months to four years old, who were blessed.

Travel Restrictions and the Feast

Sabah is a Muslim area and Islam is their established religion. Although there are some small and scattered Christian churches, the great majority of the population belongs to Islam. Filipinos in Sabah experience difficulties living in this country. They cannot give citizenship status as they are not born in the land, nor have they embraced Islam as their religion.

Even the children who are born to parents that are not natives of the land cannot be given legal status as citizens. Filipinos who work in Sabah can travel freely if the company they work for gives them travel papers approved by the authorities.

Others are not able to travel freely. Our brethren and their families are no exception to this problem. They don’t enjoy the freedom we have in the Philippines. We have been discussing possible travel to the Philippines to attend the Feast of Tabernacles this year. There are about a dozen who are seriously planning to come to the Feast. They are excited to experience how the Feast is to be observed. But for now, I cannot say how this plan will come about for all of them. I just encouraged them to do the best they can to get their papers, and to pray more, asking our loving God to intervene on their behalf.

This is the challenge we are facing, and we put our trust in the One who works miracles for His people. I am asking the brethren to pray for our brethren in Sabah. I believe our collective heartfelt prayers will avail much, because it pleases God to see His people asking for His help on behalf of others.

This article appeared in the August issue of United News Philippine (www.ucg.org.ph/unp).

Australia Sets 2003/2004 Budget

After considering a number of initiatives proposed by its committees and the National Office, the Australian National Council settled on an amended budget requiring a $45,000 (Australian) deficit for the 2003-2004 financial year. The deficit will be funded from the accumulated surplus as of June 30, 2003. The Council is confident the budget reflects wise stewardship of its financial resources but will keep a close watch on the position as the year unfolds, although the Church is in a sound financial position. It has pointed out that the cost of mailing The Good News and other publications to subscribers is an ever-increasing cost. In the coming year, $194,000 (23 percent) will be spent in this area.

Some of the more significant action items for the year are:

- Increase Good News distribution to 25,500.
- Develop a pilot program for long weekend seminars.
- Develop a series of sermon and Bible study outlines to assist local elders.
- Conduct a Christian Leadership Camp and a Summer Camp.
- Continue with the program of Women’s Focus Weekends.
- Develop an outreach program for scattered church youth.
- Complete the Risk Management Plan for UCG-Australia.
- Develop a Disaster Recovery Plan.
- Review church insurances to achieve lower costs.
- Upgrade the computer systems in the National Office.
- Implement a multiyear budget model.

If the objectives of the plan can be achieved, the Church will be strengthened and well placed to achieve God’s objectives—to preach the gospel and care for those He calls!

Bill Eddington

Successful Letter Box Drop in Brisbane

Sunday, July 27, the Brisbane, Australia, congregation conducted a letter box drop in the Cleveland/Thornton area of East Brisbane.

Twenty-four enthusiastic brethren delivered 3,600 letter box cards over a three-hour period. Those participating varied from the young to the young at heart, and everyone enjoyed the fellowship and beautiful sunny day. Mr. Bradford began the activity with a word to the audience, saying that the effort of this activity and open the hearts and minds of those whom He wanted to respond to this very special offer. We concluded the activity with a barbecue and a game of touch football!

David Barton

Australian Shows What One Man Can Do

Dennis Freeman, a member in Brisbane, Australia, recently decided to make a difference in the town of Rosewood where he lives. By taking to his pastor, Bill Bradford, and members of the Australian Media and Publishing Committee, he made himself familiar with the more effective programs the Media Committee was promoting. With some courage and a lot of determination, Dennis then set out to preach the gospel in Rosewood. He has placed:

- A Good News stand at Rosewood Railway Station.
- A carhordr display at McDonald’s in the shopping center.
- A Good News display at the Rosewood Community Centre, including the United States and Britain booklet.
- A Good News display and United States and Britain booklet in the Rosewood High School Library.
- A carhordr display at IGA Foodtown in Rosewood.
- A Good News display and United States and Britain booklet in a canteen.
- A one-day carhordr display on a busy visitors’ day.

Bill Eddington

Ruth Root

Daveo, Philippines, Church members participate in one of the three combined Spokesman-Graduate clubs started after the Feast of Tabernacles last year. “There seems to be happy and significant growth in the abilities and performance of the men attending club,” said Edmund Macaraeg, pastor and club director (photo by Charles Philip Macaraeg).
U.K. Conducts GN Mailing Test

Peter Hawkins, CEO of the United Church of God—British Isles, has been testing a number of changes in mailing out the Good News and the British and European Supplement. Special letters designed to facilitate rapid reader response were incorporated into the mailing process from a mailing company in Kingston-on-Thames. This was done during the posting of the July/August issue. They were all mailed with the magazine and the supplement. Each subscriber received a response envelope addressed to The Good News as well. One notice to those not in a renewal cycle gives “Some More Good News,” and encourages the reader to respond on the form letter itself. In the first few days we received 23 responses with almost all requesting at least one free booklet.

Also a number of “last chance” renewal letters were mailed to a group of subscribers who previously had shown little interest in renewing their magazine. To date we have received a very surprising 38 responses with several asking booklets and/or the Bible Study Course. In past years response has been almost nil from this particular category of subscribers. Most just dropped off the mailing list.

Some of the forms included a place for a reader to recommend a gift subscrip- tion for a friend or relative. So far, we have received 14 responses suggesting a potential new subscriber.

Response to the recent supplement article, “The Good News Responds to Your Correspondence,” has been encouraging. A number of readers have requested booklets recommended in that article.

Overall response to the recent semi-annual letter sent to the entire mailing list is now over 600. This is an excellent response of over 20 percent.

John Ross Schroeder
Camp Davidson: Following God in the Real World

From Aug. 3 to 10, 115 campers and 50 staff attended Camp Davidson on McArthur Rim. United’s camp enjoyed the variety of facilities in the beautiful mountain setting. A staff team—including seven first-time staff members who were campers last year—set a challenging and high standard. Campers responded well and were motivated not only to have fun, but to excel.

Every day began with a 45-minute Christian Living class. This year’s theme was “Following God in the Real World.” The Northwest ministry had prepared an outline, which was sent to everyone prior to camp. Classes focused on the good and bad of the world, our words and dress, prophecy, our responsibility to the world (military service) and the Sabbath. On the last topic, Rex Sexton (pastor in Washington and water-skiing director) moderated a panel of older teens who described their experiences in maintaining their beliefs despite the pressures of school, sports, music and peers.

Campers enjoyed a wide range of activities, including a 10-element low-ropes course, a seven-element high-ropes course, waterskiing, mountain biking, kayaking and a half-day hike in the Cascade wilderness. The new kayaks purchased by the national program gave every camper the opportunity to learn this exciting sport. In addition, three zip-lines—including one that started at 60 feet high—were very popular activities. Basketball, flag football, arts and crafts, archery, swimming, camp improvement, volleyball, ultimate Frisbee and “Excellence in Living” rounded out the activities.

The evenings offered additional opportunities for fellowship and participation in the activities. Each evening at camp concluded with a lively campfire, followed by a “bedside chat” for each dorm with its dorm parents. On the Sabbath, the campers enjoyed some extra rest, Bible discussions with their dorm parents, Sabbath services and a special banquet. Saturday evening ended with a final dance. Campers were able to take home their own copy of “The Davidson Days,” the camp newspaper.

Staff and campers again “let their light shine.” The camp managers were very impressed with the respect and courtesy of campers and the caring dedication of the staff. Joe Horn, site program director, stated: “Your group motivates my staff. You remind us truly what camp is all about.”

Davidson Wilderness Session: Rim and Raft

After the main session of Camp Davidson, an extended Wilderness Session was offered to the older campers for the third straight year. The schedule for this year changed to include a moderate one-day hike, and then a full day of white-water rafting on the Upper McKenzie River.

After the main session ended on Sunday, everyone drove to the base camp at Three Creeks Lake in the heart of the Sisters Wilderness Region. Tents and the camp kitchen were set up. While the conditions were much more primitive than regular camp (no electricity or running water), the tents were comfortable and the cooking of Berk Weiss was five-star! Everyone was divided up into teams to take care of cooking, cleaning and camp maintenance. The clear evenings provided a great view of the stars. Kayaks were brought for free-time enjoyment.

On Monday, we hiked the Tam McArthur Rim, a 9-mile round-trip up to an elevation of almost 8,000 feet. Although not overly high in altitude, the rim afforded a fantastic view of numerous peaks in the Cascade range. It also provided a view of a nearly 1,500-foot drop straight down! For some, though, the highlight of the hike was the chance to have a snowball fight and to do some modified sledding in a nearby snowfield.

On Tuesday, everyone enjoyed a full-day rafting trip down the Upper McKenzie River, one of the most active and enjoyable rivers in the region. The trip provided delightful views of the surrounding mountains and forests, as well as wildlife like deer, osprey and heron. There were numerous good-natured water battles between the four rafts, and most everyone had a chance to take an “involuntary” swim in the cold water.

Wednesday was a “down day” to give everyone a chance to rest, relax and fellowship. Many of the campers and staff took the opportunity to explore a major lava flow about 40 minutes away. Others enjoyed the beautiful day on the lake.

Why a wilderness session? One reason is to see God’s awe-inspiring power and beauty direct and up-close. Another is to build bonds, friendships and team unity in a way that is simply not possible in more traditional settings. Yet a third reason is to challenge oneself beyond a person’s confidence level—developing core values, perseverance and stamina. These goals were met and exceeded, and everyone is looking forward to participating next year.

Matthew Fenchel
British Isles Camp Very Enjoyable Despite Extreme Heat and a Day Without Water

UCG-British Isles’ weeklong summer camp for teenagers and young adults took place between Aug. 3 and 10. Thirteen of the Church’s young adults and teenagers, plus a young man from the United States who is currently working in Dublin, attended the activity. Eight other adults made up the total of 22 who gathered together at the Held bunkhouse just outside the town of Brecen in South Wales.

The setting, looking across to the mountains of the Brecen Beacons National Park, was immensely inspiring. The weather was perfect, although plenty of sunscreen was used when anyone ventured outside! Visitors brought the attendance at the Sabbath service to 32; this was too many for the indoor common room, so the group had an outdoor service in the shadow of two large oak trees.

One of the activities was a trip to a coal-mining museum called The Big Pit, where everyone was provided with safety helmet, lamp and respirator before descending 90 meters (about 300 feet) in a lift for a tour of the old mine workings.


While the vast majority of those attending were teens, a few young adults in their 20s were campers and assisted the counselors on each team.

On Friday evening the Challenge and Adventure groups held separate campfire programs that included a question-and-answer format Bible study. The themes of the life-skills classes were reviewed for the purpose of getting feedback from campers about the emphasis on modesty and appropriate behavior. Young people face many challenges to their faith in today’s world. Sessions like these help shape and mold their understanding of biblical truth. The foundation laid by parents in the home is therefore strengthened.

This year Heritage was pleased to have two visitors from Belgium. Jako and Renee Kasper received scholarships from UCG Germany to travel and attend Heritage. Jako worked on the soccer staff while Renee was a camper.

Thanks to the Volunteers

It is important to once again acknowledge the contribution of the volunteer staff who work at Heritage and all other UCG youth camps. Their unsellable commitment to the program makes it all possible. They are the true servant leaders of today’s Church. They provide inspiring examples and models for the campers to follow.

Darris McNeely
Finding the Joy in Christianity

Joy is one of the fundamental fruits of following Christ. But, unfortunately, joy is not often immediately associated with Christianity. Where can we find the joy God offers?

by David Baker

Perhaps you have participated in a word association exercise in the past. Someone says a word and you are asked to say the first word that comes to mind. As an example, the person conducting the exercise may say “smile” and perhaps you would answer “happy” or “cheerful.” If the person conducting the exercise said “Christian,” what words would come to mind? Perhaps you would think of “disciple,” “faithful,” “obedience,” “overcoming,” “enduring,” etc. All these words are associated with our calling. But how long would it take you to think of the word joy?

Joy is one of the fundamental aspects of a true Christian. But, unfortunately, joy is not often immediately associated with Christianity. Oliver Wendell Holmes once remarked, “I might have entered the ministry if certain clergymen I knew had not looked and acted so much like undertakers.” Joy can be described as a strong feeling of pleasure, gladness, cheerfulness or celebration. Joy is a fruit of God’s Spirit and therefore should be a fundamental characteristic of all Christians. It is interesting to note that the Greek word that is translated “joy” (chara) and the Greek word that is translated “gladness” (chale/fast) share the same common root word. As Christians, we experience a great deal of joy through the grace of God. Prior to baptism we were condemned to die for our sins (Romans 3:23; 6:23). But we received a pardon; we received grace from God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, an appropriate response should be gratefulness and joy.

The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13). We are filled with joy through the power of the Holy Spirit.

One of the words used to describe God and His Kingdom is joy. King David wrote, “You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11). David indicates that there is fullness of joy in the presence of God, and therefore God’s Kingdom will be a kingdom of joy. The apostle Paul echoes this in his letter to the church in Rome: “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). Christians can be joyful even during times of trial. James wrote to members of God’s Church, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:2-4). Later James adds, “You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11). By focusing on the joy of being reunited with His Father (Hebrews 12:2).

What are some of the ways that Christians can experience joy? One way is to simply slow down and relish the moment—Enjoy the life that God has granted us. We live in such a fast-paced world that we can become quite irritated over the slightest interruption. (Which just occurred with me as my 3-year-old son interrupted my concentration on this article.) As Christians we should slow down and enjoy the journey toward the Kingdom of God. Solomon wrote, “Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already accepted your works. Let your garments always be white, and let your head lack no oil. Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity. For that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 9:7-9). As Christians we should experience joy in the many blessings that God has given us.

We should rejoice for the preaching of the gospel. Luke recorded in the book of Acts that the city of Samaria experienced great joy when Philip came to them preaching the gospel (Acts 8:5-8). The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi that he rejoiced for the preaching of the gospel regardless of the motive (Philippians 1:12-18). Christ instructed the Pharisees and scribes through the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son to rejoice when someone repents (Luke 15). The Church continues to preach the gospel to the world and people are continuing to respond to that message and therefore we should rejoice! The apostle Paul informed the members in Philippi that he experienced joy in praying for them (Philippians 1:3-5). We can experience joy as we pray for another. John wrote that he experienced great joy in hearing that members he knew continued to remain in the truth (3 John 4).

These are just some of the ways that Christians can experience lasting joy. You may have noticed that real joy involves touching the lives of others in a positive way. It’s the way of giving, sharing and outward concern for others. Joy follows love as a fruit of God’s Spirit and the expression of love brings real joy to our lives.
Let’s Meet, Greet, Welcome and Love Everyone

Is your congregation cold or welcoming? A spiritual stumbling block or a warm place to grow?
You can make a difference!
ors, some of whom don’t yet have close friends in the congregation. In fact, you can say to your good friend, “Let’s go say hello to that person.” And then the two or three of you can go together to speak to the newer person. Remember what Jesus said, “And if you greet your brother [“friends” in margin] only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?” (Matthew 5:47).

“Greet Every Saint!”
Many scriptures relate to this subject, but John says, “And the Lord said, ‘Go forth and greet all your neighbors. The Bible word *aspazomen* is translated 14 times in the KJV of the New Testament as “greet” and 32 times as “salute.” In the NKJV, virtually all 46 places are translated “greet.” In most of those places, the writer is exhorting the saints to greet one another. In Philippians 4:21, Paul says, “Greet every saint in Christ Jesus.”

Paul and Peter admonished, “Greet one another with a holy kiss” (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14). For us, these verses mean to greet in a manner that is appropriate to our culture, to your relationship and in a manner that is warm and friendly. A verbal greeting with a smile and eye contact is the main thing. In the Church today, we commonly shake hands, and sometimes a hug or a kiss on the cheek is appropriate. Just remember that 46 times we are told to greet one another! It’s a way to express gratitude, love and respect.

In John 14, John writes, “Greet the friends by name.” People really appreciate it when we try to remember and use their names.

Lest there be any misunderstanding and friendliness too!” “Greet all those who lead you, and all the saints” (Hebrews 13:24, margin).

We are exhorted in the New Testament to be hospitable—in fact to be “given to hospitality” (Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2). This doesn’t just refer to having people into our homes. Every week we can all be a “reception committee” to make everyone feel welcome, respected and loved. We can help new people and visitors feel “at home” in our church halls and activities and “part of the family.”

Hospitality: Love of Strangers
In the New Testament, the Greek word for hospitality is *asphalios* which literally means “love of strangers” (“strangers” can refer to foreigners but also to visitors and new attendees). Now consider the importance of how we treat “strangers”.

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom . . . for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in” (Matthew 25:34-35).

Let’s focus on a moment. “I was hungry and you gave Me food.” Part of hospitality is offering food and drink to guests, and people who come to our church services are our “guests.” A congregation that is able to serve snacks and has occasional potluck meals not only is considered hospitable, but the food goes a long way in promoting and enhancing conviviality and fellowship. There are lots of examples in the Bible about believers “breaking bread” together, and gathering for meals and feasting.

It’s extremely important for parents to teach these principles to their children, and to teach their children to be not only respectful but friendly to people of all ages!

Our congregations and we as individuals will be judged by God as to how we care for the “little ones” that God has been calling and working with for a long time to bring them to the point of attending church services. “Whoever receives one little child [lit- eral child or child in the faith] like this in My name receives Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin [literally “stumble”], it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:5-6).

Cold Congregation—Spiritual Stumbling Block
The impression—right or wrong—that a congregation is cold has often been a spiritual stumbling block to people.

Consider the following: Some who attend our services have no strong commitment to one particular congregation even to the United Church of God. Sometimes a UCG member will switch to another UCG congregation nearby because he feels it is friendlier. More serious for UCG is when someone turns to another church organization because its congregation is friendlier. Even more serious is when someone decides churches are not the warm, loy- ing places that they are supposed to be and decides to stay home every Sabbath. Worse still is when someone decides Christians are no more loving than anyone else and decides to reject Christianity and the Bible altogether. All of these things happen. I’ve heard many examples.

We cannot fault some of the people in the examples above for being too quick to judge or being weak spiritually. But aren’t they correct in looking for a group that has deep love for everyone in the group? Didn’t Jesus say, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35)?

“Bestow Greater Honor”
Consider 1 Corinthians 12, a beautiful chapter that compares the Body of Christ with a human body. A major lesson is that every single member of the Body of Christ (and those being called by God to be a part of the Body) is important to God and should be important to all of us.

How do we apply verses 23 and 24, which say, “And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it?” Following are some examples.

If a person is new or is visiting, he needs extra attention to get over his nerv- ousness and to feel welcome and at home. He must not feel like he is being treated as an “outsider” in a congregation full of cliques. In fact, it is vital that he soon feel needed.

If a person is sick or having some other major trial, that person needs extra prayers by the brethren. He also needs the comfort and encouragement of cards, calls, E-mails and sometimes assistance.

If a person is having a temporary financial trial, prayers and encourage ment are needed, and sometimes financial or physical gifts or loans. If a per son is shy, he or she needs extra attention to draw him out. If a person is lonely, he needs people who want to be true friends. If a person doesn’t feel he or she is attractive in looks or personality, make that person feel respected, liked and loved. If a person needs help—help. Hospitality and love should extend beyond the services. For many people, especially single people, Saturday evenings are often the loneliest times when no one has invited them to go anywhere with them. The uplift of a church service is often partly spoiled when it is followed by a lonely and depressing Saturday evening. We all, and especially our single people, have a wonderful opportu nity and responsibility for initiating social plans and then inviting everyone! (I don’t mean inviting everyone in one evening necessarily.)

All of the above are examples of how “there should be no schism [“division” in the margin] in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another” (1 Corinthians 12:25). It’s wonderful to be in the Body of Christ—to love and be loved. The next chapter is the Love Chap ter, which says, “[If] [we] have not love, [I] am nothing.”

Pray every week that God will fully use you to reach out to, love and edify others. Let’s meet, greet, welcome and love everyone. Let’s work at being a loving spiritual brother or sister to everyone within our congregation. And then our Father will be pleased.

“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren” (1 John 3:14).

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16).
God’s Plan to Make Us—and the Universe—Sin-Free

Sin and evil are but a momentary stain on the fabric of eternity. God’s plan, as revealed in the Holy Days, shows how sin will ultimately be completely removed.

by Robert Berendt

The book of John begins with a time that he describes as “in the beginning.” These three words also are found in the first verse of the Bible (Genesis 1:1). This beginning was a period in which sin and evil simply did not exist. Everything was sin-free.

There is no mention of how long these sin-free conditions lasted, but we could say it was for eternity into the past (though we can’t understand what that means). No one was plotting and scheming and no one was jealous or angry. There was perfect love in all relationships and no one felt unjustly treated. Everywhere one looked there was peace and harmony—a true paradise.

Our Creator is constantly praised for the magnitude of His creation. In Psalm 104 we read that the heavens God knew that we could not overcome the influence of evil on our own. God provided a Savior for mankind, whose sacrifice would provide forgiveness to those who repented as well as making available the awesome gift of the Holy Spirit.

were stretched out like a curtain (verse 2). God in His wisdom made everything perfect, complete and satisfactory (Psalm 97:10; Zechariah 8:17). In 1 John 3:8 He explains that Satan has been sinning since the beginning, that he causes sin and that Christ’s purpose is to erase and destroy sin. (Psalm 97:10; Zechariah 8:17). In 1 John 3:8 it explains that Satan has been sinning since the beginning, that he causes sin and that Christ’s purpose is to erase and destroy sin.

remonstrated with sinners. Ezekiel 28:12-14 describes the generous gifts God lavished upon His angels. This glimpse reveals the value God placed on all of His angels. Though little is revealed, we see a scene of sin-free coexistence and productive work, filled with joy, complete unity and the total absence of sin or evil.

God acted. It turns out that God can use the experience of sin and evil in the process of bringing into existence children who would be like Him. They would learn to hate evil (Psalm 97:10; Zechariah 8:17).

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What’s New—the Church’s “Good Works Program”

The new “Good Works Program” is intended to provide an organized way to help brethren to help others in the Church who face unusual, emergency situations that could not be anticipated or budgeted for. The intent of the program is to make these situations known to the Church, and to coordinate the distribution of funds that are raised by congregations or groups in fund-raising efforts.

We do not ask that tithes and offerings be directed to this program, for the reasons given above. Instead, if congregations or groups within a congregation wish to engage in special fund-raising efforts (for example, car washes, garage sales, candy or fruit sales, etc.), and dedicate some or all of the proceeds of those efforts for one or more special needs that arise and are publicized as “Good Works Projects” by the Church (via the Church’s Web site), then those funds should be sent in a separate check to the home office. The coordinator will see to it that they are then passed along to the appropriate designee(s). Once sufficient funds for a particular project or need are received and passed along, that project will be removed from the Web site.

To make this program work smoothly, we ask that the following steps be followed by those wishing to help:

1. Read the list of projects on the soon-to-be-established “Good Works Program” page of the Church’s Web site. The site address will be www.ucg.org/goodworks.

2. Discuss fund-raising efforts with the local pastor.

3. Engage in the fund-raising efforts, and make it clear that the effort is separate from tithes and offerings.

4. Send a check to the home office (payable to “United Church of God”) to the attention of “Tom Kirkpatrick, Coordinator of Good Works Program,” indicating the project or projects that the funds were dedicated to. Please indicate in a note that accompanies the check that any surplus funds (over and above the amounts needed to meet the needs of that particular project) can be used to help with other “Good Works Program” projects. Otherwise, the Church will need to return the surplus.

Again, thank you, brethren, for your generosity and desire to help our brethren facing emergency needs. Your assistance in following these procedures will help your aid to reach those in need as quickly and efficiently as possible.
The first time her heart stopped, it came back on its own. The second time, the nurses came to get me, as they thought she was deceased. Our pastor, Victor Kubik, came in and gave a quick prayer, and amazingly her heart started beating.

The doctors immediately transferred Darlene to a hospital where they had the necessary equipment to take care of her.

During the next few days, Darlene’s heart stopped three more times. She was on a ventilator for a short time with no hope of placing a defibrillator in her, when one of the heart specialists decided that a higher being was watching over Darlene, and that it would be OK to take the chance. The doctors and the hospital staff were amazed to see Darlene leave the hospital on her own initiative. Darlene still has a weak heart muscle, but God made sure that she still has life.

Thank you doctors, thank you Mr. Kubik and, most of all, thank you God.

Bill Ennis
Lafayette, Indiana, congregation

Quotable Quotes
Debbie Ash of the Houston North, Texas, congregation saw these unusual quotations on signs and on the Web:

“Hate the truth decay—burn up on God’s Word.”

“Patience is a virtue that carries a lot of wait!”

“Forbidden fruits create many jams.”

“Even a mosquito needs to work before it gets a slap on its back.”

Small Kids, Small Car: Tips for a Fun Feast Trip
With three small children, ages 3, 7, and 10, and a very small car, we try to make the trip to the Feast as enjoyable as possible. Below are some of the things we’ve found that helped make travel easier and more fun for the cutest members of the family. Of course there are many other products and many free fun things, as well, but these are ones our children like.

Best Travel Activity Book Ever! (Rand McNally, $3.95). This book is full of puzzles, mazes, riddles and more fun for the cutest members of the family.

The Most Incredible, Outrageous, Packed-to-the-Gills, Bulging-with-Activities Snacker Book You Ever Seen (editors of Klutz Press, $10.36). All three kids literally spent every extra minute in the car silently playing with this book.

Imaginetics “License Plate Game (www.cambitoy.com, $7.99). This magnetic toy allows you to look for license plates from different states on the way and put them on the magnetic car board.

From the Proverbs: The Apple of Your Eye
Proverbs is one of the most fascinating books of the Old Testament, and its teachings are even more relevant in today’s world than they were when it was written.

One of my favorites, a most thought-provoking proverb, is Proverbs 7:2: “Keep my commandments, and my law, and the apple of my eye” (emphasis added). The term apple of your eye is an old one, first used in Scripture in the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:10. Today it evokes images of something we are fond of or love dearly. But in the Hebrew, it had a deeper, richer meaning. Vine’s has this to say: “The ‘apple’ is the most precious and most securely guarded part of the eye. It feels most intensely the least injury; the loss of it is irreparable.”

Do we treat God’s law as the “most precious and most securely guarded part” of our lives? We should, just as we closely guard our eyes from smoke, dust and foreign objects, and wouldn’t dream of putting just any old thing in them, as they feel “most intensely the least injury.”

Are we so careful with our beliefs? Do we allow any idle wind of doctrine that comes along to damage what we hold as truth? Our ministers go over the same subjects again and again because they are so easily forgotten, so easily subject to injury through neglect.

Jesus Christ, who inspired the Proverbs, echoed this theme in Matthew 13:45–46 when He likened the Kingdom to a “merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” He also cautions us not to “cast [our] pearls before swine” (Matthew 7:6). Why? Because our beliefs are not indestructible or easily replaced. Why take chances with something so precious?

Also, Vine’s said “the loss of it is irreparable.” That’s a disturbing word, irreparable. Beyond repair. We love our eyesight and we are blind ever afterward. Are we as concerned with losing our spiritual eyesight? Should we be, to lose God’s law from our hearts is much more permanent than this physical body. Thankfully we have a loving God who “delights in mercy” (Micah 7:18) and who is quick to forgive us, upon repentance, every time we slip or take His laws for granted.

So let’s apply Proverbs 7:2 and keep God’s law as the “apple of our eye.”

Layne Partin

God Is Not Creating a Race of Hermits
God is in the process of building a loving family—not a scattered race of hermits. We were made to have deep, caring friendships with our physical and spiritual family members. God designed us to have the feeling of loneliness as a warning signal that we are insufficiently connect-ed to our fellow human beings. It’s not sinful to feel lonely—but it’s meant to motivate us to change, not something that must be sacrificially endured.

We were not made for isolation from human contact, but for deep, intimate relationships (Genesis 2:18).

As Christians, we love one another as family (Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 Peter 2:22; 3:18). Our connection to Christ and each other is likened to being various parts of one human body (Ephesians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26), and Paul specifically points out that we need each other (1 Corinthians 12:21).

The notion that we should be isolated from human relationships and relate only to God comes from the gnostic notion that the physical universe is evil and that to attain a higher spirituality we have to disconnect from the material world and concentrate purely on God. This idea prevents healing in Christians who desperately need to grow in their ability to relate to others.

Christ lived among us, and suffered as a human being, so that He could experience firsthand what it is like for us. He gained a deeper dimension of compassion for us through this experience (Hebrews 4:15; 5:8). By learning to deeply love others and have compassion for them, we grow in one of God’s most important character traits. This is one reason for the existence of the Church (Romans 11:1). God does not do everything Himself. He gives us opportunities to participate in what He is doing and to grow in His ways—by working through us.

Learning to love others is part of learning to love God (1 John 4:20).

We were made for deep, satisfying friendships—with God and our fellow human beings.

A Map to Life
The Ten Commandments are a map to life—the right road. Go this way and you won’t get lost. No dead ends, no broken bridges or deep gullies, no abrupt steep cliffs. This is not a whimsical man saying, “You do it my way or else,” but a loving Father telling you the right way, looking out for you. Just as a loving mother holds you tight and kisses away the bumps and scratches, so God is a million times more loving. He has lived forever; He’s “been there,” so to speak. He doesn’t make mistakes as we do. Even our parents, who try to do all things for our good, make mistakes, in love. But our Father God doesn’t.

Sometimes there are tests, but we have had tests in school too. Just study a little harder and you’ll make A’s.

Marie Lisson
Collinsville, Illinois, congregation

Be Ready to Give an Answer: Why Do You Go Away for a Week for a “Feast”?1
The Feast of Tabernacles is one of seven annual festivals given by God to ancient Israel that were also kept by Jesus Christ, the apostles and the New Testament Church (Leviticus 23:39-43; John 7:1-14; Acts 18:21). Jesus Christ’s role is the central theme of God’s festivals, which reveal the sequence of events in His plan.

The Bible shows that the Feast of Tabernacles will be observed by all mankind during Christ’s 1,000-year reign on earth, which it pictures (Zechariah 14:16-19; Revelation 20:4). Then the many prophecies of an unprecedented time of peace and prosperity will be fulfilled (Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:1-9; 35:1-10).

For More Information: Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God; God’s Holy Day Plan; The Promise of Hope for All Mankind; Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Keep?; and Bible Study Course Lesson 12 “God’s Festivals: Keys to Humanity’s Future.”
Science fiction is only a springboard for the ultimate reality God has in store for us. This true story is for children—human children in United as well as all the children of God.

by Joe Shepherd

Most of us know of or have viewed various Star Trek adventures. We’re familiar with Mr. Spock, Captain Kirk and his successor Captain Picard, and the android Data. “Beam us up, Scotty,” is understood around the world. Star Trek clubs, with thousands of fans holding annual conventions, abound.

In the real world, man has traveled at over 18,000 miles an hour, been on the moon and explored Mars via computer-robot technology. Today, science fiction is very popular. Audiences love movies showing superhumans solving incredible problems in a world where man has achieved intelligence and power to handle almost anything. But, we all know, it’s only fiction!

Yet, there is an expression that “truth is stranger than fiction.” When it comes to the plan of God for man, truth is indeed “stranger than fiction” to most. To God’s people, however, the future that science fiction analysts anything “stranger than fiction.” When it comes to the plan of God for men, God will be able to do this—imagine it! The warp 10 speed of the Enterprise would be a mere “snail’s pace” in comparison.

“Beam Us Up”

“Beam us up, Scotty,” was a frequent command on the Enterprise. The Star Trek creators imagined a fictional technology that disassembles body molecules, atoms and chromosomes, then transports and reassembles them into the same person, or same matter, in split seconds.

In the Bible, we see the reality. Christ was “beamed away” and back again, right through solid walls. He did not need to be dematerialized. He could simply travel right through matter. “Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him, and He vanished from their sight . . . Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, ‘Peace to you!’ (Luke 24:30, 36, emphasis added). The disciples were terrified by the sudden appearance of Christ in the room, thinking they were seeing a ghost.

Limitless Power

The incredible weapons of the Enterprise can stun, kill and vaporize. Photon torpedoes can atomize a spaceship as large as an aircraft carrier. But the reality is even more stunning. When the sixth trumpet blew, announcing the return of Jesus Christ, an army of 200 million will be assembled to assist Christ. Zechariah 14:12 tells us, “And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet; their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.” This vast, unprecedented great army . . . gone in seconds; not by a weapon but by limitless power used in a limited way.

Just as great a demonstration of God’s limitless power is seen in Joshua 10:12-13: “On the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel: ‘O sun, stand still over Gibeon; O moon, over the Valley of Ajalon. So the sun stood still; and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies’” (NIV).

Beyond Rocket Science

Mr. Spock, and his successor, Data, can solve complex problems quickly. They have computerlike minds with incredible knowledge, data and logic seemingly at their fingertips. Impressive? It surely is. But let’s compare this to God’s mind.

In Psalm 147:4-5 we read, “He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.” Try to imagine this—every star has a name!

God has an orderly universe and knows exactly each heavenly body occupying a limitless space. Let us ask, will His sons and daughters, living forever, also come to know them?

Follow-up to Q&A About Marrying Outside the Faith

Several people responded to the Q&A published in the July 2003 issue of United News about United Church of God ministers performing marriages between abeliever and an unbeliever. We uphold the teaching of the apostle Paul that we should not be “unequally yoked together” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

It is United’s policy that a minister of UCG should not be performing marriages between a believer and an unbeliever. If a minister believes he has an exception (for example, a young person who has grown up in the Church, but is not yet baptized), he is to discuss the situation with his regional pastor for advice before he officiates at such a wedding. Exceptions are rare, but they do come up.

This policy also prevents an individual from “shopping around,” which was another concern of some respondents.

We encourage those interested in this subject to read the full study paper, “Marrying Outside the Faith,” which is on our Web site at www.ucg.org/papers.

Cecil Manuville

King David thought about God’s vast wisdom and power and he said in Psalm 139:17-18 that God’s knowledge, wisdom and power cannot be measured in any human terms. It is a wisdom and power perfectly harmonized with love, mercy, compassion and patience—qualities which humans lack. Remember, God’s family is going to be like Him.

Medical Miracles

The doctors of Star Trek have been provided with an impressive array of medical miracle-instruments. Just touch one to a nearly expired person, and with a “beep-beep,” cells are regenerated, molecules and DNA put right and the patient rises, well again.

But how about this? In Luke 22:50-51 we read, “One of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, ‘No more of this!’ And he touched the man’s ear and healed him” (NIV). A mere touch and he was healed with a whole ear!

Even more amazingly, we see an example where simply saying the words at a distance healed an illness. In Matthew 8:6-8 a centurion asked Jesus, “Lord, I am a centurion; I have servants. ‘Now let’s compare this to God’s mind.

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King David thought about God’s vast wisdom and power and he said in Psalm 139:17-18 that God’s knowledge, wisdom and power cannot be measured in any human terms. It is a wisdom and power perfectly harmonized with love, mercy, compassion and patience—qualities which humans lack. Remember, God’s family is going to be like Him.

Medical Miracles

The doctors of Star Trek have been provided with an impressive array of medical miracle-instruments. Just touch one to a nearly expired person, and with a “beep-beep,” cells are regenerated, molecules and DNA put right and the patient rises, well again.

But how about this? In Luke 22:50-51 we read, “One of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, ‘No more of this!’ And he touched the man’s ear and healed him” (NIV). A mere touch and he was healed with a whole ear!

Even more amazingly, we see an example where simply saying the words at a distance healed an illness. In Matthew 8:6-8 a centurion asked Jesus, “Lord, I am a centurion; I have servants.

Remember Lazarus? He had been dead for four days! The simple words of Christ were, “Lazarus, come forth!” Yes, this was Christ, but we see in Acts 9 that a man like ourselves, filled with God’s Spirit, raised Tabitha from the dead. This is a power that creates life.

It is God’s power, in this case, shown through one of His servants.

While it’s very difficult for us to envision the awesome future God is preparing for His children, He does give us inspiring glimpses that let us see it in part. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

Whatever we can envision about our glorious future, it will be incommeasurable surpassed by its reality. Try seeing ourselves in this setting: “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). This was not just hyperbole—Christ Himself confirms in Matthew 13:43: “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Human technology and achievements are indeed impressive. In the voyages of the Enterprise, we see the crew use powerful weapons to blast great holes through mountains, travel at awesome speeds into vast space and distant planets, heal terrible diseases and save alien civilizations. As an immortal, glorified, wise and loving son or daughter of God, you will be infinitely faster, more intelligent, more powerful, a much better healer, teacher, helper and problem solver than the crew of the Enterprise, or mankind’s combined science and technology, could ever imagine.

For most of humanity, truth is “stranger than fiction.” But our destiny is indeed “to boldly go where no man has gone before” and to do that which no man has even done, as sons and daughters of God in joyous service to Him—forever! on

Joe Shepherd is associate pastor for the Victoria, British Columbia, congregation.
Preteens Enjoy Camp in Oklahoma

This year’s preteen camp at Osage State Park in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, was a wonderful experience for over 90 staff members and children who attended. The campers were excited and some were a bit nervous, but that soon passed.

The children ranged in age from 6 to 12 years old. The campers enjoyed fishing, swimming, outdoor games, challenge games, boating, Christian Living classes and a field trip to Woolaroc game preserve and museum.

Carol Blackwell and Andrea West led the kitchen staff. No one left hungry—there was plenty of food to go around. We also sampled the fish caught during the week.

A grease fire started in the rear of the store, but Mike Blackwell saved the day when he came in with a fire extinguisher and put it out. It was very smoky and extinguisher dust covered the entire kitchen, so the kitchen staff had an extra four hours of fire extinguisher clean up on Wednesday.

After the fire one of the kitchen staff talked with the park ranger. He commented that it was amazing how so many people could work together in such a small space. He said that if it had been him, even with a bunch of his friends trying to do what the staff had done, they would all have ended up fighting. He thought we looked like an assembled line, and he was very impressed with how slick, fast and smoothly the clean up went.

T h e r e were two Christian Living classes per age level. The first class was on words. Tom Clark said, “They understood lying and taking God’s name in vain are wrong, but we discussed gossip, put downs, deceit and disrespect as well. This age group is wonderful to work with. They are filled with wonder and energy, but still have an innocent approach to life.”

Local pastor Roy Demarest—a close personal friend and golfing partner of Mr. Waterhouse—spoke in the sermon about the lack of real heroes in today’s world. He mentioned the role Mr. Waterhouse had played in being a “real hero” in Church history through his energies, efforts and consistency in his service to God, His people and to the calling of preaching the gospel.

After services, the congregation enjoyed a traditional potluck and a photo display of Mr. Waterhouse’s life, which was donated by his brother for this special occasion. We were all able to see the personal side of Mr. Waterhouse, with photos of his life from his youth, marriage, military service, world tours and, yes, golf! There was certainly a great feeling of nostalgia and loss as we discussed the great sacrifice this man made to God’s work.

On Sunday, the scene changed to a scrumptious breakfast, and then it was time to continue the fellowship and get ready for a day of golf in 96-degree weather. Members from many local Church of God congregations came to enjoy the food and fun and to discuss their history and memories of Mr. Waterhouse.

We then made our way to the beautiful Winston Trails Country Club in Lake Worth, Florida. Though storm clouds threatened all day long, the tournament went off without a hitch. Mr. Demarest won the longest drive and closest-to-the-pin contests. His prizes were brand new Bibles. The team of Mike, Samantha and Erin Moore and Jim Matthews (who attends with the Living Church of God) won the scramble format tournament as part of the Gerald Waterhouse Golf Weekend May 25.

Sabbath service and a taped message from Don Waterhouse (Gerald’s brother) speaking about his brother’s life, accomplishments and loves. Don Waterhouse, who is still recovering from heart ailments, was unable to personally attend, but did make his brother “come to life” for those who did not personally attend, but did make his brother “come to life” for those who did not.

We all agreed that it was a weekend that Mr. Waterhouse would have greatly enjoyed. We cannot wait until next year, but more importantly, we cannot wait until we can play a round with Mr. Waterhouse again someday in the world tomorrow.

Mike Moore

Gerald Waterhouse Golf Weekend Provides Journey Down Memory Lane

The Memorial Day weekend in South Florida proved to be a journey down memory lane as the West Palm Beach congregation hosted the First Annual Gerald Waterhouse Golf Weekend and Tournament. Visitors from as far away as Houston, Texas, came to share in the fellowship, fun and sport.

The weekend began with a special assembly line, and he was very fighting. He thought we looked like an assembly line, and he was very impressed with how slick, fast and smoothly the clean up went.

The weekend was to see the new young adults interacting with the older ones. The bridging of the generation gap and being able to spend time fellowshiping and learning about the different generations. The weekend was a success and provided an opportunity for the younger generation to learn from the older generation.

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Mike Moore

Australia Holds Third Christian Leadership Weekend

The enthusiastic young adults in our Church in Australia enjoyed a weekend full of “aha” moments over the weekend of July 4 to 6.

Christian Leadership Weekend, in its third successful year, has quickly become a highlight in the young adults’ calendars. As Peter Forster stated, “The Annual Leadership Weekend just seems to go from strength to strength, getting better with each year.”

This year’s seminar was once again held at the crisp, fresh Heathcote Scout Camp, south of Sydney, where 32 young adults joined together with eight staff. This year’s speakers included Bill Eddington, Mark Robertson, Bill Bradford and his wife, Jenny, and Bruce Dean and his wife, Jeannette. Kevin and Anne Sasse provided us with delicious food to go along with the wonderful spiritual food provided by the speakers. This year’s theme was maturity. We should always be seeking spiritual maturity and “recapture your love.”

Felicia Stokes, from Melbourne, summed up the weekend when she returned: “Leadership weekend was amazing—focused on maturity, the difference between leaders and managers, stages of life maturity (dependence, independence, interdependence) and managing finances and creating a surplus. Very good. Many lessons learned, many things to be applied.”

Bruce Dean wrote, “We are encouraging these young men and women to live a life of growing and maturing in the way of God. What is the aim? That we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13, NIV). In other words, maturity is to be more like Christ.

“So, again, why do we have these Christian Leadership Weekends? We want to encourage our young adults to learn personal leadership skills—to be like Daniel and his friends and be able to stand for what they believe. We hope they can grow to become church leaders and, most importantly, leaders in the Kingdom of God!”

The weekend was topped off with renewing of friendships and making of new ones. An encouraging aspect of the weekend was to see the new young adults interacting with the older ones.

Rennie Banham commented that the four speakers gave excellent presentations that were obviously well researched and thorough, as well as including a number of real “ahas” for the audience to take home. She added, “I loved catching up with friends and making some new ones. What a great weekend all round!”

Renee Dean

“Recapture Your Love” Marriage Retreat Set for Nov. 15 to 16 in Lakeland, Florida

Are you and your mate in need of a nice weekend getaway? How about going to a place where you can be inspired by God’s Word regarding marriage and have some time to spend with your special someone? Could your love life use a little rekindling? Maybe just a little spark? Or perhaps a flame thrower? If so, the Orlando, St. Petersburg and Tampa, Florida, congregations have a special event just for you.

Our congregations cordially invite you to attend “Recapture Your Love”—a marriage retreat, Nov. 15 to 16, in Lakeland, Florida. Ministers Fred Kellers, Chris Moore, Richard Thompson and David Treybig will be presenting key principles that make for a happy marriage.

A special housing rate has been negotiated at the first-class Four Points Sheraton in Lakeland. The room cost (plus tax) is: one or two beds, $59; junior suite, $69; and executive suite, $79. Reservations can be made by calling the facility at (800) 511-5566 by Oct. 15 and identifying yourself as part of the United Church of God Marriage Retreat. A flyer with maps is available on the Tampa Bay Web site at http://web.tampabayrr.com/ucgstp.

What if you are over age 18, single (or your mate won’t come), and want to attend free? You are welcome, too!

Richard Thompson and David Treybig
Births
Sam and Shaleena Dungan of Campbell, Alabama (Laurel, Mississippi, congregation), are pleased to announce the birth of their first child. Ethan Samuel Dungan was born on Nov. 24, 2002. He weighed 7 pounds 5 ounces and was 20 inches long. His proud grandparents are Eddie and Marcia Dungan of Campbell and George and Eileen Fuller of Whatley, Alabama.
Aaron and Heidi (Deonier) Boise of Estacada, Oregon, are pleased to announce the birth of their fourth child, Alisha Leeann. Alisha joins siblings William (7), Rachael and Caroline. Alisha Leeann Boise with William, Rachael and Caroline

Weddings
Dan and Peggy Good of Max Meadows, Virginia, and Bert and Edith Diamond of Floyd, Virginia, are pleased to announce the marriage of their children Kelly Marie Good and Arnold Joseph Diamond. The wedding took place on May 10, 2003, at the Comfort Inn Conference Center in Dublin, Virginia.

Alisha Leeann Boise with William, Rachael and Caroline

Anniversaries
Ernest and Kathleen Buck were honored on their 40th wedding anniversary, June 28, 2003, by the Eureka, California, congregation. The first surprise for the Bucks was that their youngest son, Tony, his wife, Julie, and their son, Izaak, who live in Orovile, California, showed up in Eureka for Sabbath services. Julie’s parents, Steve and Barbara Wester, who live in Coos Bay, Oregon, and are good friends of the Bucks, were there also.
The second surprise was after services when they were presented with a gift from the congregation, a clock made from rock, which was made by local member Anita Hamill. There was also a well-bloomed money tree that provided them the funds to be able to go out together and enjoy the evening. They were both very surprised and pleased by the whole event.
Mrs. Buck first heard Mr. Armstrong on the radio in 1964 while the local area was suffering a major flood. The subject Mr. Armstrong was talking about was Noah and the Flood. She was baptized in 1965 while pregnant with their second child.
The Bucks have seven children, two sons-in-law and two daughters-in-law: Casey Buck, David and Kandy Goodrich, Eric and Daisy Hynek, Wiley and Deborah Buck, Ruby Williams, Tony and Julie Buck and Lacey Buck. They also have 19 grandchildren (11 boys and eight girls).
The East Texas congregation of the United Church of God honored Don and Peggy Ditto with a reception to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary Aug. 9 immediately after Sabbath services at the Gilmer Civic Center.
A large, beautifully decorated cake—one of Julie Wilkins’ creations—defined the milestone event. Sarah Baker and Nancy Worthington helped coordinate the activities for this enjoyable occasion.
Frank McCrady, associate pastor, read a brief history of the Dittos’ 50 years together.
Having met at age 13, Don Ditto

Obituaries
Calvin McClay, a faithful member of God’s Church for 47 years, died on June 6, 2003. He was born on April 6, 1933, in Waller, Texas, the third of nine children and lived in the San Diego, California, area for the last 50 years. He had three children, 19 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.
Calvin set a local record for perfect attendance. You could find him at every service, Holy Day and social event with his ever-present camera in hand. He captured the history of the San Diego congregation in his pictures. Calvin McClay was a pillar in the congregation and will be greatly missed.
Nancy McCracken, 64, died April 13, 2003, of cancer. Nancy attended the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, congregation, in 1961 and was baptized in November 1962. She was a charter member of the Wheeling, West Virginia, congregation that started in 1965 and was ordained a deaconess in January 1971.
Nancy served as Wheeling’s first cheerleading and volleyball coach for over 15 years. She served as an assistant YOU coordinator and assisted the social coordinator and the fund-raising coordinator. In 1995 she helped start the first Unit ed Church of God service in Wheeling.
Nancy sent hundreds and hundreds of cards and sermon notes to the brethren around the world. She was a lady of many talents. Her talents were greatly appreciated and she will be missed by her husband, family, Church family and friends.
She is survived by her husband of 48 years, three sons, two daughters, 13 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.
The funeral service was conducted by Don Henson, pastor of the Pittsburgh, Wheeling and Meadville (Pennsylvania) congregations.
“Council,” continued from page 3
tions,” which had already been approved by the Council but had gone through a final rewrite prior to its release. Having been approved, all three study papers should only be on the Church’s Web site within three to four weeks.

Ethics, Laws and Relations
Robert Dick, chair of the Ethics, Rules and Roles Committee sought input from the Council on behalf of Ger- ald Seelig, who is preparing a proposed amendment to bylaw 8.4.3. Before doing so, Mr. Dick wanted to make sure that the proposed amendment would not conflict with any amendments the Coun- cil might be planning to submit and also asked the Council to consider whether they felt there were any problems or diffi- culties with the proposed amendment.

The amendment specifies how a vacan- cy on the Council would be filled in the event a runner-up is not ratified by the General Conference, the nomination and re-election of fillers, though some key areas are not keeping pace with previ- ous years’ results.

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By resolution, the Council unani- mously approved the printing of the sup- plemental hymnal.

Cash Reserves Policy
Mr. Dean presented the Council with a proposed resolution written by Dr. Kirkpatrick to establish the Church’s cash reserve policy. As decided earlier in the week by the Council, the resolution states that the Church will manage the financial affairs of the Church with the intent to maintain “a minimum of 10 weeks cash reserves (cash and near cash balances, offshore reserves of amounts design- ated by the Council for retirement), i.e., 19.23% of the operating budget of that year…” The resolution also describes options the Council would have if there were a budget surplus for a fiscal year. The resolution passed unanimously.

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On www.ucg.org

- UCG Commentary on This Week’s News
- Weekly commentaries by the United Church of God written on world news and trends, from a biblical perspective. Read these recent commentaries and more:
  - “Though Not Shout the Ten Commandments”
  - “Mr. Bertusconci and the Two Souls of Europe”
  - “God Bless America—But Why Should He?”
  - “Saddam, Hitler and Stalin: Beyond Satan’s Slaves”

- Current World News & Trends
- Browse up-to-date world news events by subject categories!

On vcmagazine.org

- The September Virtual Christian Magazine includes “Can God Forgive Me?”, “Who’s Minding Your Grandchildren?”, “My Days at Preteen Camp” and more.

On youthmagazine.org

- The July-September Youth United has articles on friendship, “The Most Powerful Friend,” “Making Peace,” “News for Youth,” Q&As and more.

What’s New on the Web?

Response Percentage

- Banner Ad 28%
- From a friend/family member 25%
- From a previous affiliation 3%
- From an advertisement 8%
- From a publication in a waiting room 1%
- From a UCG publication 11%
- From a previous affiliation with the Church 1%
- From another UCG publication 4%
- From a friend/family member 2%
- From a Web page 15%
- From this Web page 15%
- From a friend/family member 25%
- From a previous affiliation 3%
- From a UCG publication 11%
- From an advertisement 8%
- From a publication in a waiting room 3%
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cards. A total of 37,815 new subscribers have been added to the files at a cost of $2.21 per response (CPR). As cards continue to come in, we are inching toward our original 2002-2003 goal of 39,500 subscriptions at $2.13 CPR.

John LaBissiere

Fourth ABC Sampler Largest Yet

There were 41 students at this year’s Cincinnati Sampler Aug. 18 to 22, the largest group in the four years ABC has been conducting samplers. They ranged from age 16 to those who are grandparents. Roy Holladay, Ralph Levy and Gary Antion each taught two classes per day for a total of 30 hours of instruction. The summer students came from Washington, Florida, Georgia, Wisconsin, Illinois, North Carolina, New York and Ohio. Several are regulars in the sampler program.

“Since each year different segments of ABC classes are covered, eventually, say in 20 years or so, those who keep coming may complete the entire ABC program!” said Mr. Antion. “They are all to be congratulated for their diligence and for their love of God’s Word. This year’s class has expressed their gratitude for the program and even suggested having another in December, if possible.”

Now 27 students have been accepted into next year’s regular ABC program. The final date for receiving applications for 2004 is Dec. 19, 2003, and orientation is scheduled for Jan. 4, 2004.

Card Packs Bring in 37,815 Subscribers

For the past several years, the United Church of God has used “card pack” print promotions as an efficient, low-cost means to reach literally millions of potential Good News subscribers. With this advertising method, our insert cards cost less than 2 cents each.

In 2002-2003 budget year, card packs were again the foundation of our print advertising efforts. We mailed a total of 5,750,000 Good News cards to households in the United States.

Vertical Thought

Vertical Thought magazine is scheduled to be mailed out the last week in September and hopefully young people will receive it before the Feast.

If a U.S. Church youth or young adult (aged 12 to 22) has not received his or her copy by the end of October, it is possible that he or she is not on the Church’s address file. Those young people can write to the home office and let us know the following: parents’ names, your name, address and birthdate. It is important to include the birth date so that the subscription is properly calculated. We plan to renew subscribers at age 22. Print runs do not allow us to offer it to older adults at this time.

Connie Seelig

Good News Radio Response Analyzed

Good News Radio

Response Analyzed

In the first three years of broadcasting the Gn radio program, 7,611 responses were received. This is an average of 49 per program. The best response weekend was March 30 with 135 callers inquiring about “The Spirit World.”

Also, programs dealing with the after-life continue to draw a good response. All five programs dealing with death, heaven and hell rank in the top 20 programs (out of 59 total programs recorded).

Broadcasts related to prophecy are also doing well. Of the 12 programs dealing fully or partially with this subject, eight rank in the top 20.

John LaBissiere

Florida Station Airs Gn Radio

The 50,000-watt, news/talk radio station WFLA 540 AM in Orlando, Florida, began airing the Good News radio program at 6:30 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 31. WFLA has a large listening area that covers much of central Florida. The station features talk show hosts Rush Limbaugh and Dr. Laura Schlesinger in its daily lineup.

Our program is promoted throughout the week using 30-second spot ads. Also, a 15-second tag is aired at the conclusion of each program to encourage listeners to tune in regularly.

The Orlando metropolitan area, with a population exceeding 1.14 million, is considered a large media market, ranked 39th out of 276 Arbitron markets. The central Florida area is a top international tourist destination.

John LaBissiere

“Leadership,” continued from page 1

- Developing wisdom and judgment.
- Principles of research.
- Principles of counseling.
- Role of deacons and elders.
- Relevance in speaking.
- Media development and evangelism.
- History and overview of UCG documents.

The above topics were presented by a variety of speakers from the home office and numerous pastors from the field ministry. The purpose of the program in passing the baton of truth to others in the United Church of God is threefold:

1. The development of local leadership.
2. The development of leadership toward possible ordination.

Periodicals Postage Paid at Milford, Ohio, and at additional mailing offices
Launching a new product into the market can be the beginning of a wonderful friendship or a total fiasco. It is a key moment that needs all the care and attention it can get. For your search engine optimization to work, you need to give users information that will truly be useful to them. Focus especially on optimizing three areas: Keywords. This excuse, however, is a thing of the past. In order to better understand which products are the best sellers on social networks and how social media marketing contributes to sales, I would like to share with you today the results from IAB Spain’s latest annual social networks study. The best selling products on Social Networks. Both pilot study programs are grounded in WKKF’s commitment to supporting community-led solutions that help remove the barriers to economic security faced by lower-income families and families of color. Parents who are financially secure can better support their families and help ensure their children can succeed in school and in life. STEPS and MOVE UP are part of the foundation’s efforts to increase opportunities for employment in quality jobs. Another recent example is the foundation’s participation in the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative, an employer-led coalition designed to create meaningful If a product is good enough, are sales incentive programs required during the launch period? Any product has to fight for attention from the sales force and resellers. A well-designed incentive program can supply a vital push for a new product during the critical launch period. What to Do Plan the Launch Carefully. New product launches are a pivotal time for businesses, and they require meticulous planning. A product launch is the culmination of months or even years of effort, from across the organization, in readying a product for market. It constitutes a high profile activity that can signal