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United News™

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News At a Glance

French GN Relaunched

United is again printing a French-language edition of *The Good News* titled *Bonnes Nouvelles*. The last time we had a French edition was in May/June 1998. *The Good News* magazine is now being published in five languages—English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Treasurer's Report

The Church's income has continued to hold steady through the first half of this fiscal year (which began July 1, 2002). Though the regular tithes and offerings (Category One) are slightly below the budgeted amount, the strong Holy Day offerings of this past fall make it appear likely that we will receive total donations very close to the budget for total income by the end of the fiscal year. For this we are very grateful—to God (our ultimate Provider), and to the brethren and others who have faithfully supported the work of the Church.

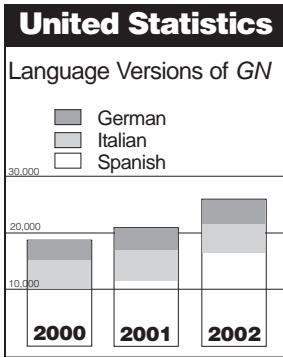
Through Jan. 24, Category One income is up 1.86 percent compared to last year. The amount of increase budgeted for this year was 2.4 percent. The four fall Holy Day offerings exceeded the budget by \$115,000.

It appears that the final totals for this fiscal year will be either slightly above or slightly below the total budget of \$18,240,000, depending in large measure on the three spring Holy Day offerings.

Our operation managers and employees have cooperated in this somewhat challenging year by controlling spending. For this we are also grateful.

As always, I request that the brethren join us in praying that God will give us wisdom in handling the financial resources that He makes available to the

See "News at a Glance," page 2



Redesigned Site to Be More Usable and Effective

by Aaron Booth

Within the next few weeks, you will notice a significant change when you visit the United Church of God Web site. The Church's main Web site, www.ucg.org, is being redesigned in an effort to produce a more effective tool in preaching the gospel and preparing a people via the Internet.

The newly designed site will feature a new visual layout, complete with a new color palette, a new navigation menu structure, timely world news and much more. The overall goal of

redesigning the UCG site is to increase the usability and accessibility of information provided by the Church.

A new navigation menu bar has been developed to shorten download time and get the visitor to valuable content more quickly. Also, a more usable navigation structure was developed to make it easier to find information within the site. This was done with a consistent naming of sections and subsections that contain relevant information. The visual design was adjusted to allow for more eye-catching ad banners that link to articles and booklets and to deliver a consistent

page layout throughout the entire site.

Included within the new design of the home page is the ability to sign up for E-mail updates, view the Bible Reading Program topic for the day, view links to youth-related articles, click on visual ad banners for booklets and articles and view up-to-date world news headlines. Within the site, visitors will be able to view more images of various covers from the *Good News* magazine and printed booklets, see photos of the home office and its staff and find an informative Web site "Help" section.

What can you do to prepare to get the

most from the new Web site design? The site has been designed and developed to work with the newer Internet browsers so that recent technologies can be taken advantage of to make our visitors' experience more enjoyable. We hope you will take the opportunity to update your Internet browser; and if you are not sure how, we will have some helpful pointers within the new Help section. We hope you find the new design pleasing and more usable and accessible for you.

Aaron Booth was hired in December as Internet managing editor. See a sneak preview of the site on page 2. **UN**

Television Efforts Poised for Growth



Howard Davis and Randy Stiver on *Tomorrows* television; Steve Myers and Gary Petty on *Good News* television

by Peter Eddington

In today's fast-paced, technologically-advanced world, there are many opportunities and avenues available for preaching the truth of God's soon-coming Kingdom. The

United Church of God is taking advantage of several media including the printed word, the World Wide Web and radio broadcasting. One area that you may not hear a lot about

See "Television," page 6

Firstfruits of Mexican Web Site Baptized

by Larry Roybal

In December the ministry in Mexico saw the fruits of how the Internet has helped some find the Church.

A few months ago, the Calderon family, who live in Navojoa, Sonora (in the northern part of Mexico), started to write and ask questions about United. They were very interested in us because they were already Sabbath keepers and members of the Church of God (Seventh Day).

They had been separated from them because of some differences in doctrine mainly concerning Christmas keeping and because the church they were attending did not use unleavened bread for the Passover service. They did not want to compromise with this and so they separated themselves from fellowship with them.

Their search began. They started to look for Sabbath-keeping churches on the Internet and found one (a splinter group from the Worldwide Church of God) and asked for a visit. They were happy to have found another Sabbath-keeping church, but were saddened because the representative told them that they could in no way keep the Passover with them.

They were also a little skeptical because of the excessive use of Mr.

See "Mexican," page 3

Youth Education Team Meets in Tampa

Members of the Youth Education Team (YET) met in Tampa, Florida, Jan. 19 to 21 to review and plan programs for youth including preteen instruction programs, United Youth Camps, *Youth United* E-magazine and Youth Corps projects. Those in attendance included Larry and Bonnie Greider, Doug Horchak, Joel Meeker, Jim and Judy Servidio, David and Teddi Treybig

Doug Horchak, member of the Council and chairman of the YET, opened with an overview of where this team fits in United's educational efforts. Noting that we continually have new youth becoming eligible for our programs and that our youth represent some of the most fertile soil for sowing the seeds of the gospel, there will be a continuing need for the YET to coordinate spiritual educational efforts for our youth.

Preteen Programs

Jim and Judy Servidio, coordinators



Bonnie and Larry Greider, Joel Meeker, Doug Horchak, Judy and Jim Servidio and Teddi Treybig (photo by David Treybig)

site that our doctrinal position and Sabbath school policy has been not to use pictures of Jesus. While some outside resources cited in the lessons do include such pictures, such citations are not meant to undermine our policy.

Shifting to Festival instruction, plans are to revise the activity booklets for younger children. The team also concluded that an effort should be made to offer Festival educational materials or activities for middle school youth. Other plans include looking into producing a training video for teachers and placing resources and teaching tips on the Web site.

Youth Camps, Youth Corps

Larry Greider, overall United Youth

See "Youth," page 2

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"Television," continued from page 1

is our ongoing television broadcasting, being aired on local community cable-access stations through programming produced by two volunteer congregations. These two congregations, on opposite sides of the country, have put together teams of dedicated volunteers who produce the programs from start to finish!

The Portland, Oregon, congregation has been producing a television program for distribution on community-access channels even prior to the inception of United in 1995. The Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation has been putting forth similar efforts since 1996. Both programs have an excellent cost per response from their programming due to the nature of community access television: Airtime is generally free, or very low cost, for residents of a local community who wish to sponsor a television program in their town. On pages 6 and 7 of this issue you will read of the successes of both programs and how you can be involved.

Two Programs Available

The Portland *Tomorrow* program is hosted primarily by Howard Davis, and a team of 20 local congregation volunteers work diligently each week to produce new material. They tackle the script writing, lighting, camera work, sound recording, editing and postproduction. Their unwavering dedication to *Tomor-*

row has to be congratulated after so many years of service.

Beloit's *Good News* television program is now in its seventh year and the quality of production has made many advances in just the past 12 months. Recording and editing is done in the basement of a home owned by an elder and his wife in Rockford, Illinois, where the set, lighting, cameras and editing equipment are housed. This program has a main host each time, who is joined by a "guest" to discuss a biblical topic or to analyze world news and trends in light of Scripture.

The *Good News* format is very similar to Portland's *Tomorrow* program, and the host/guest set-up seems to work very well. It is only on rare occasions that a single presenter does the whole half-hour or hour program. It appears that our audience likes to "eavesdrop" on these "conversations," and when a particularly interesting discussion develops the phone lines start ringing! We have found the same format to work very well for the *Good News* radio program as well.

You Can Be Involved!

Almost every city and town in the United States has one or more community access television stations that provide free or low-cost airtime for local residents. Some of the programming seen on these channels is obviously produced on a very low budget by eager citizens of the community. As a result, the much-higher quality and production val-

ues of United's two television programs stand out as material to be taken seriously—while costing us very little!

At present we are airing our two local congregation-sponsored television programs on only around 50 stations across the country, while around 2,000 are available! All we need is a sponsor in each town to contact his or her local cable access facility to inquire about local airing requirements, sign up and get one of United's programs on the air! Sometimes there are some nominal fees for tape duplication or local sponsor endorsements, but it is usually low cost or absolutely free.

We hope that we can go from the current 50 or so stations to around 250 stations in the coming 18 months or so. This medium is very inexpensive, and the responses are well worth the few dollars spent on duplication and mailing of tapes to the local television stations. Please get involved at this time if you are able!

Long-term Goals in Television

Plans are on the drawing board to eventually have a home-office-produced television program. The experience being gleaned by our current team of volunteers, pastors, presenters and guests will be invaluable in the final formulation of a national television program for the United Church of God. As you know, broadcast television is a much more expensive way to reach people

than the Internet, the printed word or printed advertising. However, now that United has a solid foundation of booklets on key biblical subjects, plus a full-color bimonthly *Good News* and the thought-provoking *World News and Prophecy*, the Church is in a very good position to go to the next step—a professionally produced, weekly television program.

This program would also take advantage of free community-access television stations, but would, in addition, be ready for paid, broadcast airtime. The goal of such a program would be to preach about the soon-coming Kingdom of God and also solicit new *Good News* subscribers who would then be fed an ongoing menu of the truths of God.

There is one barrier in the way of United bringing these plans to fruition, and that is simply cost. We anticipate that preparing a television studio at the home office that includes a modern set, studio lighting, cameras and editing equipment, could be done for around \$125,000. Even this amount is not presently available in the Media and Communications Services budget. We

pray that in the not too distant future some funds will become available.

However, even once a professional television studio is prepared, there is the ongoing weekly cost of airtime. This becomes a significantly higher dollar amount. While we should be able to take advantage of low-cost local community-access television channels, the desire would be to also purchase airtime on broadcast and cable channels that would reach across the country. We would certainly appreciate your prayers as we work diligently to preach the gospel in as many ways as possible—including broadcast television.

In the Meantime...

We pray that funds and resources will soon become available so that United can go an extra step in this regard. In the meantime, we have two good, local television programs produced primarily by volunteers from the Portland and Beloit congregations that are ready for more local involvement! Please consider becoming a local sponsor in your town and contacting one of the men listed below this week! **UN**

Who to Contact

If you would like to sponsor one of the two available programs in your area, please feel free to contact one of the following men:

- For the *Tomorrow* program produced in Portland, Oregon, please contact Howard Davis at howard_davis@ucg.org or by telephone at (503) 760-0973.
- For the *Good News* television program produced in Beloit, Wisconsin, please contact Steve Nutzman at steve_nutzman@ucg.org or by telephone at (608) 758-9228.

After Seven Years, *Tomorrow* Program Set for More Growth

■ What can you do to help with this exciting method of preaching the gospel on television?

by Robert Dick

How do you reach people with God's Word? What format do you use? How do you motivate people to call for further information about beliefs contrary to theirs, from a church they have never heard of? And how do you build an audience that will keep coming back for more?

After seven years of development and more than 10,000 telephone responses, the *Tomorrow* television program is wrestling with these issues with increasing success. Through the work of the ministry and brethren, *Tomorrow* participants have produced and edited over 300 programs.

In 2002 God blessed the effort with more than 2,700 telephone calls and Web requests for literature in the United States, up 80 percent over the previous year's 1,500 calls. While some of the increase can be attributed to newly added stations, the number of calls from existing stations has also increased.

Tomorrow has contributed over 25,000 booklet requests and thousands of *Good News* subscriptions to United's efforts to preach the gospel to the world.



Howard Davis, *Tomorrow* television program moderator, talks with Ralph Levy, Ambassador Bible Center faculty member (photo by Chris Robertson)

The Work of Many

Production and distribution of the *Tomorrow* program is a collaborative effort of dedicated and disciplined member volunteers. *Tomorrow* host Howard Davis is assisted by approximately 20 dedicated Church members in Portland, Oregon. Taping is done at Mt. Hood Community College television studios free of charge and post-production editing, duplication and mailing functions are handled from rented facilities in Portland.

Additional volunteers in local congregations throughout the United States are responsible for distributing the program in markets from Boston, Charlotte and Austin to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle.

The television program's reach is further assisted by the *Tomorrow* Web site, designed and maintained by professional Web master Chip Chuprinko. Due to the power of the Web, viewers generate additional literature requests from all over the world—Europe,

Africa, the Middle East and Asia. *Tomorrow* can be viewed at www.Tomorrow-ucg.org.

Tomorrow's Structure and Format

According to Howard Davis, program host and moderator, "The structure and format of the program is a key to the successful connection with our growing audience." The one-hour program is divided into six segments of seven to eight minutes with breaks for commercials featuring the Church's literature.

The program bears a deliberate resemblance to the nationally aired PBS *Charlie Rose Show*, after which it is modeled. The set provides a dignified, contemporary feel, distancing the program from the world of television evangelism. Thought-provoking topics, cut up into bite-size segments with commercials for related booklets and the *Good News* magazine, give the program its appeal.

From its inception, the program has been interactive, with a moderator and one or two guests discussing topics of biblical and prophetic interest. Originally *Tomorrow* featured pastors from the Northwest exclusively as program guests. While they still serve as the backbone of the program, *Tomorrow* has also drawn upon the expertise of pastors and instructors from around the nation.

In addition to the ministry in the Northwest, the program has featured pastors from every region of the Unit-

ed States. *Tomorrow's* guest pastors include Paul Suckling (Boston, Massachusetts), David Treybig (St. Petersburg, Florida), John Elliott (Phoenix, Arizona), Ralph Levy (ABC), Melvin Rhodes (Lansing, Michigan), Donald Ward (Ruston, Louisiana), Bill Jacobs (Albuquerque, New Mexico), Bill Bradford (Oakland, California, and now Australia), Darris McNeely (Indianapolis, Indiana), Robin Webber (Los Angeles, California), Victor Kubik (Lafayette, Indiana), Robert Fahey (Chicago, Illinois) and Roy Holladay (UCGIA president).

Inspiring Audience Responses

Response is what it is all about. Inspiring comments continue to come in as viewers respond to *Tomorrow* programs. Some examples in the last two months are typical: "I am new to religion. Your program is wonderful!"—Vancouver, Washington. "I appreciate the booklets I have received, looking forward to more!"—Denver, Colorado.

A pastor in Salome, Arizona, said, "I really enjoyed the program on 'America in Prophecy.'" Several from around the United States made comments like this one about the Halloween program called "Holiday for Satan": "I really didn't think there was a devil, but your program convinced me. Please send the literature." One lady put her enthusiastic request simply: "Thank you, thank you, thank you,

thank you. Send the literature"—Charlotte, North Carolina.

Some callers indicate they are seriously searching for God, and the program offers them personal answers. "I am looking for the real Jesus. The one taught by the churches is fake!" said one man. Another said, "I have had a bad year full of problems, guilt and financial issues. I turn on the TV and find free material dealing with my problems. Thank you so much." Yet another said: "I don't believe we are supposed to celebrate Halloween and the other Christian holidays. Glad I found someone who agrees and teaches that. Send me the literature on the Holy Days."

Where to From Here?

At the beginning of United, the

Tomorrow program was a regional program, cablecast exclusively in the Northwest. With the approval of the Council of Elders in 1998, the program was allowed to be distributed in any church areas in the United States that requested it. Since that time *Tomorrow* has spread to New England, the Atlantic seaboard, the South, Midwest and West.

In early 2002 *Tomorrow* was required to create an oversight review team of ministers around the country for review of television scripts for the one-hour program in order to further expand.

In August 2002, UCG President Roy Holladay and Media Committee Chairman Vic Kubik visited Portland for a review of the program, meeting with the 20 volunteer staff who pro-

duce the program under Mr. Davis' direction.

"*Tomorrow* has demonstrated consistent growth in both quality and results in all areas of content, production and post-production," Mr. Holladay said. "Its sustained depth of volunteer personnel has demonstrated an excellent blend of local participation and national home office direction. It fits with the United Church of God meld of membership and ministry doing God's work together."

Would You Like to Help?

From its original program distribution to cable-access stations in and around Portland, *Tomorrow* has spread to 40 cable company locations across the country. This is in reality only the tip of the cable-access iceberg, which is



Roy Holladay appears on a *Tomorrow* television program

made up of thousands of companies operating in the United States.

In many communities members and ministers are able to sponsor the

Tomorrow program on their cable system. It simply requires someone to sign up to become a local sponsor and meet the cable access facility's airing requirements. You do not even have to be a subscriber to the cable system to be a sponsor, as long as you live within the cable franchise area.

All expenses for tapes, duplication and mailing will be paid. Anyone interested in sponsoring the *Tomorrow* program on their cable-access station can contact Howard Davis at howard_davis@ucg.org or by telephone at (503) 760-0973 for further details. UN

Cable Television Could Certainly Use More Good News

Volunteers in Beloit produce the *Good News* television program, which other volunteers arrange to air free in their local areas.

by Steve Nutzman



Media operation manager Peter Eddington gives advice to Galen Morrison, *Good News* television video editor

The *Good News* television cable-access program began in 1996, soon after United began. From the outset we have coordinated our efforts through the Council of Elders and the Media and Communications Services department. After some reorganization, programs once again began to be produced in late 1998 after receiving approval from the Media Committee of the Council.

So far, 43 half-hour programs have been produced. The Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation has paid for the majority of costs associated with the program from its local evangelism fund.

In October of 2002, we asked for the assistance of Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services operation manager, in producing the half-hour

The on-air presenters are Darris McNeely, Melvin Rhodes, Steve Myers, Gary Petty and Jerold Aust. During taping, one man serves as a host and the other man as the guest. The host asks questions of the guest and the viewer, in a sense, "listens" in on their conversation. The presenters desire to present the truths of God directly from the Bible but in a conversational tone. A natural give-and-take banter develops between the two presenters during the programs.

The programs are divided into three segments and a one-minute *Good News* magazine ad follows each segment. The toll-free number is mentioned throughout the program so viewers may call in to request free literature. All programs highlight a particular booklet from the UCG booklet inventory.

Many callers have expressed appreciation for seeing the program on their local station and some have asked for a local minister to contact them. The toll-free number is answered by voice mail and the literature requests are forwarded to the home office for processing.

Viewers are also encouraged to log on to the *Good News* television Web site to order literature or to view programs at: www.goodnewstelevision.org. From the beginning, the goal of the *Good News* television program has been to work with the home office in preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God via cable-access television. Most cable-access stations do not charge for airing programs and many air the programs several times a week at various times.

Our dedicated crew of 12, made up of United members from the Beloit congregation and one member from a

United congregation in Chicago, have been trained at a cable-access station in various duties. These include camera

news and current events. We feel this gives a good balance and mix of subjects for the viewing audience. Some of



Steve Myers and Gary Petty tape a *Good News* television program

work, sound editing, lighting, directing, editing, Web page design, tape distribution and other aspects of television production.

Before each taping, we ask God to bless and inspire our efforts and to use the programs in preaching the gospel to the local communities. It has been a humbling experience for everyone involved because of the challenges that are involved in television production.

About a third of the programs deal with Christian living, a third with prophecy and a third deal with world

our program outlines actually come directly from UCG booklets or the *Good News* magazine.

The *Good News* program is currently shown in seven states on 12 stations. The tapes are dubbed by a UCG member in southern California. Once the tapes are sent back to us, we send them to the local sponsors, UCG members or pastors, who have requested the tapes. The sponsors deliver the tapes to their local cable-access station and once they have been aired a number of times, they are returned so they can be shipped to another station. We suggest repeating the programs because this allows our efforts to be more efficient and stations generally don't mind repeating programs from time to time. UN

Making the Most of Good News Distribution and Cable Access TV

In June 2001 we began distribution of the *Good News* magazine on newsstand pedestal displays in five supermarkets in our LaFollette, Tennessee, community. After nearly 14,000 copies were picked up over a 19-month period, we began to think that due to the name recognition of *The Good News*, the Church's cable-access television program might be a superb follow-up.

After conducting some preliminary research with the local station, we obtained wholehearted endorsement to proceed on the project from our pastor, David Dobson. We then contacted Steve Nutzman and Galen Morrison of the Beloit-produced *Good News* television program. They responded enthusiastically and rapid-

ly and within days we were able to hand deliver the first two videotaped programs to WLAF-TV in LaFollette.

The first program, entitled "Will Christ Return?," aired on Sunday, Jan. 11, at 11:30 a.m. It was an excellent, timely and attention-grabbing program, especially in the current atmosphere of potential war with Iraq. Although it takes time to build a television audience, we were very excited and pleased to be informed that responses are being recorded by Beloit's toll-free voice mail center. Our Knoxville, Tennessee, congregation, of which the LaFollette community is a part, will be praying that many more people will choose to tune in and respond.

John and Linda LaBissoniere



Darris McNeely appears on the *Good News* TV program

Encouraging Cable TV Listenership

After arranging to air the *Good News* television program on our local cable-access station, we wanted to do something to encourage people in the community to tune in.

Prior to distribution of the January/February 2003 *Good News* magazine on the supermarket newsstand displays, we placed labels on the front covers of all the copies. The labels

read: "Watch the *Good News* Television Program on WLAF-TV LaFollette, Channel 12, Sundays, 11:30 a.m."

We thought this would be a simple, inexpensive and efficient means to help point people to the Church's excellent program and stir up more interest in the wonderful truths of God.

John and Linda LaBissoniere