

Together

Worldwide Church of God News

November/December 2006

Volume 1, Number 4

Church Administration & Development

CAD Restructuring

By Dan Rogers

For the past several years, CAD has operated through ten district superintendents (DS's). Our DS's are exceptional, and they have done an outstanding job. However, after discussions with many pastors, DS's, denominational leaders and the CAD staff, we have seen that a new structure is needed for our future.

Resources offered by CAD will soon begin to be delivered by two new teams—one focused on pastoral administration and the other on ministry development. This approach will help us focus the time and energies of CAD leaders on their particular areas of giftedness and expertise. With this approach, CAD will continue to provide pastoral leaders and congregations with excellent administrative and development services while maintaining current apportionment levels.

As CAD director, I will provide leadership, training, and oversight for the CAD teams, for pastors and other elders, and for our congregations and their related ministries. I will continue to work alongside Nancy Akers, Charles Albrecht, Susan Dick and Pat

Inside This Issue

- 3. Q&A about changing the church's name
- 4. Summer camp reports
- 7. Missional members in Canada
- 9. Events—past and future
- 12. Announcements



Regional Pastoral Leaders: Lorenzo Arroyo, Spanish-speaking churches; Keith Brittain, southeastern states; David Fiedler, northeastern states; and Ken Williams, western states.

Shaw in the CAD office to coordinate administrative and development activities for pastors and congregations.

Pastoral Administration

Pastoral administration will provide pastoral leaders with supervision and relational support through peer-level **District Pastoral Networks**. There will be 30 networks in the United States, each with about 10 Congregational Pastoral Leaders (senior pastors, pastoral team leaders or small group church leaders). Each network will be led by one of the senior pastors in the group who will be appointed to serve as the **District Pastoral Leader**.

We envision that each network will meet about six times per year—usually face-to-face, though some meetings may be by phone conference. Some meetings will take place at regional or national conferences. These meetings and related operations will provide support, encouragement, coaching, sharing of ideas, and accountability in a team-based setting. We take seriously the need to build teams and to share ministry.

In this new structure, the District Pastoral Leader will be the pastors' direct point of reporting and accountability. Pastors can call him to discuss administrative questions and issues, and he will receive and review their monthly church attendance and quarterly financial reports. (These reports are *vital* for planning, measuring goals, and setting the budget for the work of our denomination in the U.S.)

Each District Pastoral Leader will report to and be supported by a **Regional Pastoral Leader**—Ken Williams in a western region; David Fiedler in a northeastern region; Keith Brittain in a southeastern region and Lorenzo Arroyo in a language-based 'region' of Spanish-speaking congregations. These regional leaders will provide administrative support, counsel, and other resources to the District Pastoral Leaders in their region.

Ministry Development

CAD will provide ministry development services to WCG church leaders and congregations through a team of **ministry developers**. These develop-

Together: Worldwide Church of God News is published six times a year, copyright © 2006 Worldwide Church of God. All rights reserved. Subscriptions are sent automatically to contributing members of the Worldwide Church of God who live in the United States. For changes of address, phone 1-800-924-4644. See www.wcg.org/together for a longer version of *Together*.

Editor
Mike Morrison

Senior Editor
Paul Kroll

**Published by the
Worldwide Church of God**

Living and Sharing the Gospel

President
Joseph Tkach

Superintendent of U.S. Ministers
Dan Rogers

Superintendent of Missions
Randal Dick

Media Director
Mike Feazell

We gratefully accept contributions to help meet our publication costs. If you would like to support this ministry, send your tax-deductible donation to Worldwide Church of God, P.O. Box 5005, Glendora, CA 91740-5005.

Notice: We cannot be responsible for the return of unsolicited articles and photographs.

Postmaster: Send address changes and Form 3579 to Together, Box 5005, Glendora, CA 91740-5005.

Unless noted otherwise, scriptures are quoted from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

CAD Restructuring

from page 1

ers will provide training and consulting in Great Commandment—Great Commission (GC2) disciplemaking ministry, together with equipping in such specialized ministry development concerns as ministry to children, teens, young adults, parents and married couples; church planting; and mediation and reconciliation. Training will be provided through regional conferences as well as through district pastoral network training sessions. We also plan to use media resources such as DVDs, the internet and teleconferences for ministry development.

Ministry developers will include me, Lorenzo Arroyo, Randy Bloom (Church Multiplication Ministries director), Ted Johnston (Generations Ministries director), and Curtis May (director of the Office of Reconciliation Ministry).

Other DS's will be making transitions. Bob Taylor will retire from employment as a DS but will continue to serve the denomination in various ways. As noted below, Bob Persky and Al Barr have become pastors. We all thank these men and their wives for outstanding service in the past and pray for continued blessings in their new areas of responsibility.

Forward Together

This new structure will be phased in, with completion scheduled for spring 2007. Please be patient as we work together to implement the transition in each area. Thank you for your dedication to the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ as it is carried out in the Worldwide Church of God. It

is a pleasure to work with you as we continue to advance in the mission to which Jesus has called us. Let's go forward together! 🌐

Getting Ready for Church Planting

Randy Bloom, director of Church Multiplication Ministries, and Lorenzo Arroyo, regional pastoral leader for Spanish-speaking churches, attended a Church Planting Boot Camp at Denver Seminary July 17-21.

The Boot Camp is an intensive program focused on developing new potential church planters and grooming those who already have practice with new plants. The experience was eye-opening from a Worldwide Church of God perspective.

Although WCG has its history of new plants, only recently have we engaged in the nuts and bolts of what effective church planting is all about. The class gave us an opportunity to rub elbows with church planters at all stages of the church planting process. Some of the attendees are in the fourth year of having planted a congregation, while others are just getting started.

The Boot Camp was not just about theory, but hearing stories of those in the field. We learned of the hard work and self-sacrifice church planting families make for the kingdom of God. They shared their journeys of tears, disappointments and heartaches, as well as miraculous providence, the joy of conversion and the exhilaration of church planting. According to church-plant experts, starting new churches is the number one evangelistic method for reaching the lost.



District Superintendents in transition: Al Barr, pastor in Queens and Manhattan, NY; Bob Persky, pastor of Grace Family Church in Richardson, TX; and Bob Taylor, to retire.

Frequently Asked Questions About Changing the Church's Name

We haven't heard anything about changing the church's name for a while. Have we dropped the idea?

No, not at all. But we are not rushing into adopting a new name just to make a change. This is a serious and important decision, and we must make it carefully.

What progress have we made?

When we asked for suggestions for a new name, we had several hundred ideas submitted by members and ministers. We appointed a committee who looked at the suggested names and came up with a short list of possibilities.

Many of the names were unsuitable for a variety of reasons. Some were too long and cumbersome. Others sounded rather cultish. Some of the best suggestions were names already being used by other churches and groups and because of that, we could not use them.

The committee favored Grace Fellowship International, as it had all the elements that we felt were important: our transition from legalism to grace, the international nature of the church and the fact that we are indeed a Christian fellowship. Then we found that this name also was in use, making it unavailable to us. Even variations on this name could subject us to legal challenges. The next most desirable name, Grace International Communion, was met with mixed reactions when we announced it as a possibility.

Such as?

Many people told us they did not like the sound of the name. That is to be expected. Any new name will take some getting used to. Some people who initially did not like it have told us that they eventually warmed up to it. Several have written to tell us they would prefer that we reverse

the order of the last two words, that is, Grace Communion International.

Some even wrote to tell us that the name sounds Roman Catholic. This is rather ironic, because our current name, Worldwide Church of God, when translated into some of the European languages, sounds like the ancient name of the Roman Catholic Church. We have actually received letters from Roman Catholic bishops objecting to our current name.

So, because we are a truly worldwide fellowship, adopting a new name is no easy decision.

All things considered, wouldn't it be easier just to stay with what we have?

No, not if *all* things are considered. In some cases, our current name is a barrier to proclaiming the gospel effectively. Some people have an immediate negative reaction to our name because of our past, and they leave thinking we are the same church we once were. We have also been told that our present name sounds as if we are associated with one of a number of sectarian groups, or that we are a Pentecostal denomination. To some people, our name sounds pretentious or old fashioned.

When considering a name for our denomination, we need to consider the future as well as the past. Choosing a name for a church is not simply a spiritual matter. It has practical implications. The name becomes the church's trademark, and helps people form a concept of who we are. What we call ourselves also has business and legal implications.

The name should not *misrepresent* what the church is. Older members will remember that our church has been known as Worldwide Church of God only since 1968. Before then, we were known as the Radio Church

of God. This made sense at the time, as the church had pioneered religious radio broadcasting. In the thirties, forties and maybe even the fifties, a name that included the word "radio" sounded dynamic and modern. But by the '60s, it had begun to sound quaint and out-of-date. Membership was growing, and congregations were established around the world. We needed a name that described what our church had become. So "Worldwide" was chosen, and it has served us well. But we need to ask if it is time for yet another "upgrade."

Many well-established organizations, corporations and financial institutions have changed their ponderous old names to something snappier to reflect new realities.

But isn't it more important that the name of the church sounds right to God?

In the past, we put much emphasis on the idea that the precise name of the church was one of the identifying marks of "the true church." But were we right about that?

Even the name "Christian" was not divinely revealed. It was first used by the people of ancient Antioch to describe the followers of Jesus in their city (Acts 11:26). However, it was a good name, and it stuck.

Obviously, we would not choose a name that we thought would meet with God's disapproval. But it is not a precise combination of words that makes any group "God's church."

Many congregations in the United States have already changed their names. Why doesn't that solve the problem?

Those name changes are for individual congregations, based on local needs and considerations. They are relatively easy to make. However,

Church name

continued from page 3

we still need a corporate name for the denomination that identifies our entire worldwide body and meets the many legal and commercial criteria both in the United States and around the world.

Changing the corporate name is vastly more complicated today than it was in 1968. It isn't just a case of coming up with some words with which we can emotionally and spiritually identify. We must take into account legal and business considerations, and we do not want the new name to have the same shortcomings as the old name. That is not so easy.

So where do we go from here?

The committee continues to receive suggestions and review names to discover which are appropriate and can be trademarked. The ideal name would be one that is modern sounding, unambiguous, catchy enough to be memorable, short enough to be a telephone greeting, able to be translated accurately, descriptive of who and what we are, and dynamic enough to reflect our mission. We have not found it yet. Please keep praying that just the right name will become evident to the church.

A new name is not the most urgent priority for our church. But it is important, and if we adopt a new name it must be the right one. 🌐



Servants Passage group in Minnesota

Summer camp reports

Servants Passage Voyageurs Adventure

June 25 to July 1 marked the second annual North Central Region Servant's Passage—The Voyageurs Adventure. Eleven sojourners embarked on this seven-day Passage designed to help workers and servant leaders become more effective in ministry. Five of those days were spent in the northern Minnesota wilderness of Voyageurs National Park—canoeing and camping in one of the most spectacular classrooms in the world.

The first day was spent at “base camp” in Orr, MN, preparing our gear and getting acquainted with fellow travelers. The morning of the last day was spent in Duluth, sharing with the congregation who finances the trip the many valuable lessons of Servant's Passage.

For five days, however, equipped with Bibles, notebooks and Servant's Passage guidebooks, the small group of disciples explored God's will for their lives. Each participant was encouraged to ask God, “What is it you want to tell me ‘in general’ and ‘personally’ about this call to servant leadership?” Amazingly, but not surprisingly, he answered those requests in our discussions and Bible studies around the campfire, in small group prayer, in private devotional time and while on the trail and on the water.

God's divine appointments

While Servant's Passage intensives have some reasonably expected outcomes, it is the ways that God chooses to show up that makes these intensives personally and uniquely valuable.

Three of the participants this year were women from northern Minnesota. God showed each of them that their participation in his church and kingdom work will be very valuable for raising up the next generation of believers.

Four young men from their community “just happened” to walk

through our camp one day while we were doing a group study. Both groups were shocked to see the other in a remote wilderness. “What are you doing here?” was the question each simultaneously fired at the other. One group (four men) came to fish; the other group (three ladies) came to learn how to fish for Jesus.

What were the chances? Could God be showing the ladies there are young people in their community who need the gospel? You bet.

The other two encounters happened while we were carrying canoes from one lake to another. The first involved a man from a nearby campsite who was watching us carry our gear. It seemed as if he had been taken back in time as he studied our canoes and gear. He approached and began to ask about our group and what we were doing there.

Tom Burnett, our guide, told him he was from Orr, and the stranger said he had attended a summer camp there in the early 1980s. He had been part of the WCG but was a casualty of the upheaval that happened in our transformation. The tragic death of a sister had made the religious revolution too bitter a pill to swallow.

At his campsite was the man who had been married to that sister, and his family. It turns out he was a roommate of mine back in the early '80s. Mere chance? This family's annual fishing trip is always taken a week later, over the Fourth of July, but this year circumstances put us all in the woods at the same time.

The second encounter involved two curious strangers who came up and launched into a discussion that went something like this. “So you guys are Christians, eh? What do you think of Islam?” It just happens that our guide had recently been studying about Islam and was able to give a reasonable (and pleasant) argument as to the weaknesses of Islam, a defense of the gospel and an

invitation to visit a worship service. It just so happened that one of the men lived near Orr.

God tells us what we need to hear

One of our participants was going through a time of deep searching. He feels a strong attachment to the WCG even though he has no local congregation. His question to God: "Where do you want me to be?"

While sitting in the cleft of a rock looking out at the lake, a boat approached. A woman on the boat pointed at him. When they got within earshot, she said, "Wow! You're in a perfect place." That's all she said.

As he was walking back to the campsite, he saw an object partially buried in the trail. After cleaning it off, he realized it was a button, and on it read, "I AM."

Joining the Journey

Our camps often involve information transfer, but their greatest value is their experiential nature. They provide time and space for disciples to experience a shared calling, and opportunities to meet with God and have him clarify our callings, affirm his love and grace and demonstrate his empowering presence in our ministry. *James Newby*

New Heights Camp

It is amazing when you get to see God's fingerprints all over your life. That is what the New Heights Summer Camp family experienced in Connecticut Aug. 20-26.

I asked God to send young people he knew needed to be at New Heights, and we welcomed 87 pre-teen and teen campers this year (up 10 percent). Of our total, 31 percent were new to the New Heights experience, and many of them were from outside of a WCG context.

The theme was "Free to be me in Jesus Christ." John Halford, Anthony Rice and I led daily chapel services and other activities focused on this theme—encouraging the participants to pull out the arrows of negativity and doubt that had been shot into them and allow Christ to help them be who he made them to be. We had one baptism, while over two dozen expressed a desire for a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our 63 volunteer staff members shared in the rewards of service, joy and occasional heartache that come with Christian ministry. It is an inspiration to see what these folks give, with some traveling over 300

miles to serve. Raylon Joseph came all the way from Louisiana.

Due to a generous donation, we were able to purchase a copy of *The Message New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs* for each camper. The camp closed on an inspiring yet sobering note, as newly baptized Omar Bin-Safir led us in a prayer for Private 2nd Class Nick Jenner (below), who volunteered a week of his leave to serve at the camp before he deployed with his unit to serve in Iraq. *Jeff Broadnax*



Generations Ministries camps in 2006	pre-teens	teen or older	staff	commitments*	Camp dates for 2007
Camp Keystone, Pennsylvania	23	0	14	7	July 11-15
Crossing Borders, Texas-Mexico	0	15	2	0	June 18-24
Crosswalk, Oklahoma	22	98	90		Nov. 9-12, 2006, and May 24-28
Cruising for Christ, Florida	0	15	6	0	undecided
Gateway to God, Missouri	0	67	30	15	March 23-25 and Sept. 1-3, tentative
Heartland, Illinois	59	67	65	5	Aug. 5-11
Higher Ground, N. & S. Carolina	45	111	45	25	June 24-30
New Heights, Connecticut	34	53	63	20	Aug. 19-25
Pathways, Ohio	53	53	39	10	June 17-22
SEP Southern California	70	99	102	20	July 8-14
SEP Rockies, Colorado	0	52	38	29	July 29-Aug. 4
SEP Washington	43	30	60	3	Aug. 19-26
The Mountaintop, Georgia	21	66	45	7	April 20-22
YES Camp, Louisiana	43	64	46	0	June 28-July 6
Totals	395	790	645	141	

* Faith commitments are first-time professions of faith made during camp as evidenced by a verbal or written statement, or by baptism at camp or shortly thereafter.

Higher Ground Summer Camp Revival

In the second week of August, 154 campers and 70 staff and their families began their week of revival at Higher Ground Summer Camp in Traveler's Rest, SC.

In the 1800s, the term "revival" was synonymous with "camp meeting." Historical accounts show that the Holy Spirit manifested himself in amazing ways at these camp meetings throughout Christian history. Many of the great revivals began with a camp meeting and then spilled into the community when people went home.

When you consider how our denomination's camp ministry is run, it is easy to see why there are revivals happening at our camps. We all leave the comforts, stresses and distractions of our homes and cities and com-

members had the opportunity to serve at one of our camps.

This year, we had the unique challenge of having 67 percent of the campers here for the first time. This was because our camp week got moved into August, when many of our regular campers were back in school. About 70 of the campers found us by searching for camps on the Internet. Despite having so many unchurched and fresh faces, God gave us an amazing amount of camper spirit

Ground next summer. We will now be able to have a longer camp, longer staff training time and charge only \$275 next summer.

We will be able to have camp the last week in June, which will be perfect for us. The new camp facil-



ity is in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, 10 miles east of Asheville, NC.

We are already more than half full for 2007 with early registrations, so we are considering adding an additional week-long session in 2008 if we can get staff commitment. If you want a revival in your life, check us out at www.carolinacamp.com. We accept campers ages 8-18 and staff from 17 to whatever age you are. "Moving even higher in 2007!" *Shane Bazer*

and unity from the very first day of camp.

After much prayer, and following the trail that the Holy Spirit led us on, God brought us to a new facility for Higher

Ground in God's creation for a week. We begin each day with corporate and individual prayers, praise and worship and a chapel message. Dorms have break-out discussions at the end of each chapel message and throughout the day have more opportunities for prayer and talking about the Creator. Each day ends with dorm prayer time. With so much focus on God, I would be surprised if a revival didn't take place.

The revival isn't limited to campers. Most of our staff come back year after year for a week or more of volunteer work because of the spiritual revival that happens to them at camp. It is the hardest work week of my year, but it is the most spiritually fulfilling one. I wish all church

Festival Report: Verbania, Italy

From Aug. 20-27, members from Italy and other parts of the world gathered in Intra, part of Verbania, on the shores of Lake Maggiore, for their annual celebration of Christ. The theme of the festival was God's love and how it can flow through human beings.

Prayer meetings, worship services, celebrations of the Lord's Supper and Praise & Worship evenings helped participants focus on God's wonderful love. The youth activities were well attended by the Italian youths, who meet each other only once a year, during the festival.

Special guests this year were John Adams, pastor of the Union and Lakehurst, NJ, congregations, and Dr. Ross Jutsum, founder of State of the Heart ministries, who attended the second part of the Festival with his wife. Other highlights were the visit of Professor Bolognesi, of the Institute of Evangelical Formation and Documentation and the Italian Evangelical Alliance. Also present was a delegation of members from our sister congregations in Middletown and Clarkstown, NY.

Next year's festival will be Aug. 25 to Sept. 1. For information, email Daniel Bösch at dboesch@tin.it

The WCG in Canada

Becoming a Missional People

By Gary Moore, National Director

The WCG Canada holds an annual ministers conference in the late spring. Over the last few years, we have alternated locations between Montreal in the eastern part of the country, and Calgary in the west. We have been using retreat centers, which lend themselves to much fellowship over meals and in the evenings. We generally have a guest speaker from our denominational headquarters. Michael Feazell, WCG Vice-President, was with us in Montreal this year. Dr. Feazell gave an update on the general state of the church, and some well-received presentations on theology.

Each year, we also invite a speaker from outside our fellowship. Ron Toews, Assistant Professor of Leadership, ACTS Seminary in Langley, BC, presented three sessions on how to balance our spiritual lives, our families' needs and our service to



Bible, and lives it. With the encouragement of his pastor, Chris Starkey, and the members of his local church, he agreed to do this. Now, between 10 and 20 mostly young adults are attending the Sunday morning meetings, and are being nurtured in their understanding of God's purpose and in their relationship with Jesus Christ. One or two other communities have heard of this Bible Study, and are interested in seeing one held

was struck by how much outreach was occurring in some of our smaller congregations.

One group averages only about ten people at services each week. Yet, they have a healthy church, and are willing to reach out and invite people who are interested to attend services with them. Two new believers are now counseling for baptism. Another congregation that averages about 30 in attendance is counseling four people for baptism. Clearly, the fact that a congregation is small, doesn't mean it cannot be effective in serving God's mission!

I was touched by the report from one of our smallest churches. There are only seven or eight at services each week. The members wanted to be a fruitful congregation, and decided to devote a number of months to prayer, seeking God's guidance in opening a door to them for spreading the gospel.

At the end of that period, a young woman came among them, coming out of an addictive background. They bought her a Bible and looked after her needs the best they were able. She attended for a few weeks, but has since drifted back—hopefully only temporarily. God didn't choose to give them an increase in numbers for now. What he did give them was someone they could love and witness in deed and word. After all, it is God whom we serve, and he uses us as he

I was struck by how much outreach was occurring in some of our smaller congregations.

the church in an effective and fruitful way.

We devoted one session to asking the ministers present to comment on what is working (or not working) in their congregations. We formed the chairs into a big circle, and began the discussion. This proved to be a valuable and encouraging session. One national board member mentioned that she was impressed by the amount of positive outreach going on in our congregations—more than most of us would have thought.

Members reach out

For example, one long-time member in our small congregation in Gander, Newfoundland, was asked to offer a Bible Study in his coastal fishing community. He is known in the town as a person who studies the

in their area.

Another congregation, this one in British Columbia on the other side of the country, began to experience a growing desire to reach out into the community. They had only one child attending services, but undaunted, one of the ladies began a children's church. Today, a number of children are attending whose parents are not members of the congregation. The congregation is scattered, and holds a pot-luck lunch after services each week. Some of the parents of these children are beginning to attend the lunch, and are showing interest in the church.

Sharing such stories was inspiring. Our pastors are asked to prepare a report on their congregations twice a year. In reading them this summer, I

Missional people

continued from page 7

sees fit. They are to be highly commended for seeking ways to reach out effectively. Again, a small group of Christians can be a very useful tool in God's hands. To a small church, each individual is precious!

A simple job description

Whether we are in a smaller or larger congregation, the responsibility remains the same—to be the missional people of God. We are to seek God's guidance, walk through the open doors he presents to us, and accept the place in the spiritual harvest field where he places us. We are not part of a commercial venture, nor of an organization devoted to humanly-devised purposes. We are part of the body of Christ, and we are to do his will, not our own. If we are faithful to that purpose, then God will be pleased. It isn't about us trying to get God to bless our goals, but is about aligning ourselves to his mission, and yielding ourselves as living sacrifices—as servants—in the furtherance of that cause.

Over the last few years WCG Canada has become much more settled, and centered on Jesus Christ. As much as we welcome this peace, there is a growing desire to be about our Father's business. We want to be fully engaged in the mission of God and want to be as effective as we can be in his service. Often, it is doing the seemingly small things—responding to the opportunities that are presented to us and our congregations on a regular basis—that really count.

God will use us to further his purpose. He wants us to ever more fully participate in the life of Christ. As we do, we will have the heart of God for all people, and will experience a growing passion to see lives touched and transformed by the power of the gospel. Please pray that your brothers and sisters in our fellowship in Canada will continue to mature in Christ, and be as effective as possible in his service! 🌐

European National Leaders Meet

The European Council of the Worldwide Church of God, composed of the European National Directors and the WCG Superintendent of Missions, met in Worms, Germany, on Sept. 8-11. Present at the conference were Randal and Susie Dick, Donat and Vicky Picard (France), Carl Aas (Scandinavia), Daniel Bösch (Italy and Switzerland), Frans and Lamberta Danenberg (Netherlands), James and Shirley Henderson (United Kingdom and Ireland), Santiago and Elke Lange (Germany and Austria), and Jose Ribeiro (Portugal).

We were privileged to have Joseph Tkach, his wife Tammy, Mike Feazell, and Charles Albrecht as guests from

the U.S. office. In his first presentation, Dr. Tkach emphasized that our denominational values include the power of the gospel, bringing glory to Christ, submission to the rule of God in the church, heartfelt worship, prayer, practical ministries and stewardship. He noted that headquarters exists to provide denominational identity for all WCG congregations and to provide leadership characterized by humility, integrity, honesty and faithfulness to the Word of God.

Dr. Feazell covered the topics "The Logic of Grace" and "Keys of Church Renewal," while Randal Dick shared with the participants a presentation entitled "Connecting the Members to Mission." *Santiago Lange and Carl Aas*

Odyssey editor interviews best-selling author

John Halford, Editor of *Christian Odyssey*, met in London, England, with award-winning journalist Philip Yancey at the launch of the UK version of his latest book, *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* (published by Zondervan in the United States).

"I write about issues of the heart, and see myself as an advocate on behalf of my readers," said the author. When describing what the relationship between God and humans should be in prayer, Yancey said, "God isn't trying to make us small—by prayer he is intending us to grow, to make us big."

Mr. Halford asked what Yancey saw as the main differences between Christianity in America and Britain. Since Yancey came from a strict, legalistic religious background, Halford also asked him how this had affected his prayer life and what advice he could offer others with similar background experiences. An article based on this interview will be featured in the December-January



issue of *Christian Odyssey*.

Over the past three decades, Yancey has written more than 20 books, including *Soul Survivor*; *Finding God in Unexpected Places*; *When Life Hurts*; *What's So Amazing About Grace*; and *The Jesus I Never Knew*, which has sold over eight million copies worldwide.

Mr. Halford said of the interview: "It was a privilege and honor to meet with Philip and his wife Janet today, who were both well aware of our denomination and had followed our progress over the years. I have read most of Yancey's books and find this, his latest title, to be a very readable, practical, no-nonsense book which I would thoroughly recommend." *Mary Hammond*



What's happening?

• **Dallas Churches Celebrate Golden Jubilee:** About 240 current and former Dallas-area church members attended a Golden Anniversary celebration of the Dallas churches on Aug. 27 at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Addison, TX. Grace Family Church (formerly known as the Dallas Central congregation) hosted the event.

The brethren were treated to a “Back to the Future” slide show covering the 50 years, showing members enjoying fellowship with one another at weddings, Spokesman Clubs and other activities. Pastor General Joseph Tkach sent greetings and some former ministers unable to attend also passed along their good wishes.

The congregation started on Aug. 3, 1956 with 32 adults and four children. One member attending the 50th anniversary, Louise Wynette, began attending in 1956. Another, Wilbur Lewis, started in 1957.

Jim Friddle, Dallas’ first pastor and a keynote speaker, referred to the Old Testament Jubilee Year and said: “Jubilee means ‘Shout for joy!’ We’ll be together for eternity, so we need to be close now.”

The day included a luncheon and worship led by Dallas North member Doc Gibbs, at times accompanied vocally by his wife, Vera, and at other times by Crystal Cartwright.

Current Grace Family Pastor Bob Persky and his wife, Kay, honored Ted and Wylene Dusek (below), who just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. The Duseks have been



members for 37 years. He is an elder and his wife is a deaconess. Mr. Dusek compiled an extensive written history of the Dallas churches for the August 27 celebration.

Mr. Persky urged the brethren to hold dinners and parties to rejoice before the Lord, even suggesting celebrating the entire year. He said the Jubilee Year points forward to eternal life with Christ.

Superintendent of Ministers Dan Rogers told the crowd: “No matter where your journey takes you, everything will turn out all right as long as you keep drinking from that same spiritual Rock.”

In addition to Mr. Friddle, several other former Dallas pastors also spoke. The other keynote speaker, Randal Dick, referred to Nehemiah and how he felt a spiritual burden to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Ken Swisher recalled founding the first Spokesman Club. Allen Bullock recalled attending four services in Dallas before leaving for Ambassador College, never dreaming he’d someday pastor a church in Dallas.

Jeff Molnar said, “The only thing that matters is faith expressing itself in love.” Lynn Hebert said of his ministry, “I did most of the preaching, but my wife did most of the pastoring.” He asked all the ministers’ wives to stand while the congregation applauded. *Frank Lewandowski*

• **Bengali Evangelical Association Celebrates 20 Years:**

On July 22, John and Naomi Biswas celebrated 20 years of love and hope—the 20th anniversary of the Bengali Evangelical Association’s mission work to the people of Bangladesh. Eighty friends and family met together for a buffet lunch at a restaurant in Arcadia, CA. The speakers celebrated the amazing things that have been accomplished in Christ’s name in the Muslim nation of Bangladesh:



Naomi and John Biswas and Randal Dick celebrate 20 years of ministry in Bangladesh.

- 14 churches and Bible studies,
- 12 schools in session every day,
- 500+ goats for poor families,
- ongoing self-help programs,
- the nurses training school,
- the blind and deaf program,
- the Bible training college,
- and the new tsunami shelter.

For more information about BEA, see www.bengalimission.org

• **Reunion for Big Sandy Class of 1976:**

The Ambassador College Big Sandy class of 1976 held a 30-year reunion August 4–6 in Winter Park, CO. Forty-three classmates and family members (all on varying religious paths) spent a beautiful, peaceful, fun-filled weekend at the Vintage Resort re-connecting and reminiscing. *Angie Kelley*. For many more details, see www.wcg.org/together/06/nov/events.htm

• **Can Church Be Fun?**

Richmond (VA) Grace Fellowship is working to make the atmosphere of family fun a reality. After reading the book *The Parable of the Dancing God*, by C. Baxter Kruger, our pastor decided that perhaps God is truly pleased when he sees his children playing together in his presence.

So on Sept. 17, we set up tables in the sanctuary of our hall and served breakfast during church—pancakes,

sausage, eggs, fruit, pastries, and breakfast beverages. The message was about the reversal of the fall of humanity in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. A visitor remarked that it was nice to come to a church that was relaxed and friendly.

If you have a creative way your church makes the worship service more like a party than a funeral, let us know. Bill.Winn@wcg.org

• **Vacation Bible School:** Edgemoor Community Church in Cleveland Heights, OH, held Vacation Bible School for four evenings the week of July 31. Dinner was served for the children and their parents. *David Kaiser*. For more details, see www.wcg.org/together/06/nov/events.htm



• **National Young Adults Retreat:** There's going to be rappelling? I'll be there! This was my first thought as I became the first registrant for the National Young Adults Retreat in Cheyenne, WY, held the first weekend in June. I had something to look forward to for months. The retreat would turn out to be so much more, as it consisted of praise and worship, workshops and enjoyable activities.

I attended the retreat with about 25 other young adults (ages 19-35), some local to the area and a few from as far away as New Hampshire and (originally) Togo, Africa. The retreat, organized by Denise Fertig and Katrina Weber, of the Cheyenne congregation, started with a cookout at the Fertigs' home, where Shannon Fertig, bivocational pastor, and Jeb Egbert, our guest speaker, focused us on Christ, through "popcorn prayer" (short sentences) around a campfire.

Friday morning, after praise and worship led by Katrina Weber,

Dr. Egbert led our first workshop, encouraging us to brainstorm ideas and solutions as to why the people of our age group are leaving the Body of Christ. Some of the top reasons suggested: perceived hypocrisy in the church, lack of empowerment or knowing where they fit, and apathy and distractions.

This led into a discussion of one of the solutions: mentoring. Jeb spoke about the life-on-life approach of Jesus, and how important it is to spend time with and share our lives with people we can positively influence and encourage.

After our lively discussion and some lunch, we headed for a bison ranch to enjoy a tour and talk while riding a slow open-air train.

We joked that we could have walked faster than this train, but it gave us the chance to view camels, llamas, ostriches, bison and longhorn cattle up close in safety. After the ride, many of us took a horseback trail ride before enjoying a wonderful chuckwagon dinner prepared by the Cheyenne congregation.

Saturday morning, we enjoyed praise and worship and then a lively workshop regarding relationship styles based on the book *The Platinum Rule*. After taking a short assessment, we learned whether we were a Thinker, Relater, Director, or Socializer, what that meant, and what verbal cues to look for so that we could relate to each other more effectively. This was an eye-opening experience. I am a Thinker, but I need to keep in mind that a relater wants people to get along and for no one to be left behind.

Finally, it was time to go rappelling. Since I told everyone that I wanted to do this since I was 12, I could not chicken out. Thankfully, Joe Weber, our instructor, with many years of rock climbing and rappelling experience, made us feel very safe. As I stepped backward over the edge of the cliff, I looked down and realized it was not too far. We all made it down safely and most, with

smiles, by the time we set our feet on the horizontal surface again. That worked up an appetite, and members of the Cheyenne congregation were waiting for us with snacks and water. After dinner, we played mini-golf and some of us tried out our secondary relationship styles, just for fun.

Sunday, the Cheyenne congregation joined us at the hotel for church. After lunch, we ran around downtown Cheyenne for a clever scavenger hunt with puzzling clues. Our teams were divided so that each type of relationship style was represented. My teammates took off running, but since I was not feeling my best that day and the altitude affected my running speed, I was jogging and walking. I knew my relater teammate would notice me back there, and she did, almost on cue, stopping to wait for me. We didn't win the race to return first, but I still chuckle at the memory of all of us counting through the alphabet on our fingers to find numbers for letters, and the look of shame when we discovered that we mistook the number of books in the New Testament for the number in the whole Bible. This caused us to run ten extra blocks, I think. (I was even carrying a Bible in my pocket!)

Thankfully, we had time to rest a bit before attending a dinner-dance hosted by the Cheyenne congregation. The teens of the church served us at our tables and then we enjoyed a wonderful evening of dancing, the best way to end any weekend, in my opinion. I appreciate all the efforts of the Cheyenne church family, who made our stay comfortable and memorable. Next year, we hope that even more will join us! *Charlotte Thorpe* 🌐

Next year's young adult retreat will be held June 14-18 in Ft. Collins, CO. The theme will be "Come Experience 'the Rock' in the Rockies." The guest speaker will again be Jeb Egbert. For more information, phone Denise Fertig, 307-634-9203, or Katrina Weber, 970-377-2974.

2007 Fellowship Cruises and Tour

By Ronald Kelly, Group Tour Coordinator

It's already time to begin making plans for our special group fellowship activities for 2007!

West Coast & Mexican Riviera

For those who would like additional time at sea and in worship, we are excited to announce a 10-day cruise with Holland America Line along the Mexican Riviera. The dates of this cruise are Oct. 11-21, 2007. The journey will start in San Diego, sail on the beautiful Sea of Cortez and put into port in Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan, Cabo San Lucas and Topolobampa.

The highlight of this itinerary is a fantastic shore excursion option for a full-day train ride in the Mexican Copper Canyon area. This is renowned as one of the most exotic train rides in the world—through canyons as much as four times larger than the Grand Canyon. This optional train tour is offered only one time during the Mexican Riviera sailing season, and that's why we have selected these dates for our fellowship cruise.

For those who are really "hooked on cruising," the sailing for the *MS Ryndam* actually begins on October 7 in Vancouver, Canada. It sails to Victoria for a day in port and then down the West Coast to San Diego for the Mexican Riviera cruise. This additional four-day option is priced beginning at just \$369 per person. So if a 14-day cruise suits your fancy, this is an opportunity to jump on board.

By the way, if you have never tried cruising before, but would like to "test the waters," this four-day cruise offers a taste of cruising. If there are enough members interested in this extension, we will also offer worship services on board.

Caribbean Cruise

Looking back over the many cruises we have offered during the past several years, our most popular itineraries have been in the Caribbean. The reason for this popularity is the affordable cost of a week at sea coupled with the fellowship of our brethren.

In keeping with that program, we are planning another wonderful Princess Lines Caribbean Cruise for 2007. You will board the *Caribbean Princess* on Sept. 23 and sail the Eastern Caribbean, putting back into port in Ft. Lauderdale on Sept. 30. In 2006, our itinerary was the Western Caribbean, so there will be a different set of ports and shore excursions.

We announce our programs this far in advance to allow you time for planning and saving funds for our fellowship group activities. In addition, early planning provides opportunity for you to book the level of cabin you desire (the less expensive cabins and the Veranda Cabins usually are the first to sell out, often several months before sailing).

Visit the Land Down Under

We have received many requests for us to sponsor a tour to Australia. For members who like something a little more novel and exotic, the tour to the land Down Under with John and Pat Halford is now being planned. The dates will be Sept. 22 through Oct. 7, 2007. John and Pat have hosted a number of WCG tours including China, Malaysia, England, Scotland & Ireland, and Russia. Anyone who has been on one of their tours knows they are in for an informative, insightful, inspirational and humor-filled trip.

The plan at this stage is to depart from Los Angeles and travel directly to Cairns in Australia's Tropical North. We will spend a few days exploring the Great Barrier Reef re-

gion, and then fly south to Canberra, Australia's capital city. From there it is a short drive to the seaside resort of Uladulla, where we will join some of our Australian church members for worship services and fellowship.

We will then drive north for a three-night stay in Sydney, probably the world's most beautiful port city. You can then fly from Sydney and be back home on Oct. 8. We can also use Sydney for a launching point to other places in Australia if there is interest for extension tours.


John Halford says, "There is probably no other country where Americans can feel so welcome, and have so much fun in a short time as Australia." Mark your calendars and let us know if you would like to join the Fun Down Under!

For our ground tours, we usually have a minimum number of participants required, so early booking allows us to determine if we have sufficient numbers to book the tour.

For more information

If you are interested in any of these programs, please contact John Siston at Travel Gallery (john@travelgallery.com), or call him at 800-858-6999. He will send you an information packet and/or take your reservations. We look forward to seeing you on a group travel program in the year ahead.

Although I officially retired from full-time employment in 2005, Joseph Tkach asked me to continue coordination of our group tours and fellowship cruises. My wife, Norva, and I hope to see many of you in 2007. Dr. Tkach and his wife Tammy are planning to be on the Mexican Riviera Cruise in October.

As with all our tours, WCG ministers and worship leaders will be presenting inspiring, uplifting and educational worship services on each cruise and tour. 



Announcements

Births

Hezekiah Olabode Obafemi, July 26, first child of Olabode and Rachel (Carobine) Obafemi, of Round Lake Beach, IL.*

Elijah Miguel Ramos, Aug. 1, first child of Steve and Beth Ramos, of Tulsa, OK.*

Samantha Mariska Stonick, March 28, first child of Greg and Stephanie (Black) Stonick, of Pasadena, CA.

Brandon Cole Tuckus, June 16, first child of Richard and Sonya (Timms) Tuckus, of Lexington, SC.

Graduation

Kelly Gorman graduated with honors from Southern New Hampshire University on May 13 with a B.S. in Business. Her parents, Ed and Linda Gorman, attend the Windham, ME, congregation.*

Achievement

Hilda Johnson, a deaconess in the Everett, WA, church, turned 96 in August. She is active in services overseeing the weekly coffee service and the finger foods. She does opening prayers and reads to the younger children during their story time part of the service. She hosts the ladies Bible study twice a month and attends the Everett small group Bible studies every two weeks. Hilda uses a walker to get around, but that hasn't stopped her from serving others.*

Wedding

Donald Weaver Jr. and Rebecca (Cocherell) Weaver of Sacramento, CA, are pleased to announce the Sept. 9 wedding of their daughter **Kathryne Weaver to Frank Hurtado**, in Martinez, CA.

Anniversaries

Arthur and Eula Carlisle celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 1. Mr. Carlisle is a co-pastor of the New Covenant Church of God in Montgomery, AL. Mr. and Mrs. Carlisle have six daughters, Jeannie LeGrand, Delaphine Brown, Janie Carlisle, Esther (Philip) Doelee, Juanita (Alvin) Pollard and Jacquelyn Carlisle, and two sons: Lee (Irma) Carlisle and Dr. Arthur (Harriet) Carlisle. Their daughter Arthurine (Tina) Carlisle is deceased. They have six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. The Carlises were baptized by Roger Foster at the Festival in Big Sandy, TX, in 1961.*

Paul and Olga Jendrek celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary Aug. 2. They have three children and attend Grace Christian Fellowship in Kenilworth, NJ.

David and Rhonda Robinson celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary on June 20. Both were baptized in 1970, and are the proud parents of four lovely daughters. David is an elder, and Rhonda a deaconess in the 24/7 Community Church, in Newark, NJ.

Obituaries

Franklin John Ballou, 72, of Kansas City, MO, passed away July 17. He is survived by his wife, Gladys, daughters Linda Salmon and Sarah Beeks, four grandchildren, and a sister. Frank came into the WCG in 1961 and was a deacon in the Kansas City congregation.*

Nancy Bruhn, 65, of Big Sandy, TX, died Aug. 19. She is survived by three sons: Albert, Jr., Gary and Jeff; three daughters: Sarah Gillen, Catherine Morris and Alisa Harris; their spouses, ten grandchildren, a sister and a brother.

Elcita Clarke, 75, died on Aug. 9. She is survived by her husband of 55 years, Frank, son, Michael, and his spouse, Jennifer, one grandchild, four sisters and one brother. She joined the congregation in Nassau, Bahamas, in 1968 and served faithfully until death.*

Mary E. Doerr, 79, of Duluth, MN, and Mayville, MI, died Aug. 1 with her family. She was a member of the WCG for 44 years. She is survived by four children: Thomas, Susan McKeown, James, Judy Carlson, and their spouses, daughter-in-law Colleen Doerr, one sister, 13 grandchildren and four great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Henry, and a son, Henry Jr.

Bobby Fisher, 85, of Veneta, OR, died on Aug. 30. She was the last founding member of the WCG, leaving a legacy of over 70 years of faithful service to our fellowship.

Bobby's home was less than a mile from the Jeans Schoolhouse, where as a young teen she helped set the building up for Herbert Armstrong's evangelistic campaigns. He baptized Bobby while she was in her early teens, and she often spent time with the Armstrongs in their Eugene home. Even when her declining health made regular worship attendance difficult, Bobby remained involved in the Eugene church.*

Beatrice French, 74, died June 22. She joined the WCG in 1982 and is survived by her husband, Jack, two sons, two brothers, one sister, and seven grandchildren. She attended the Melbourne, FL, congregation.

Grace Peters, 75, of Cornwall Island, Ontario, Canada, died Aug. 4. She is survived by 10 children, 13 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Angus, three sons and a daughter.*

Jessie Vernon Shoemaker, 91, of Big Sandy, TX, died after an automobile accident on July 26. Mr. and Mrs. Shoemaker had no children of their own, but Lois (Weber) and Rick Peterson and their children, James, Anna, and Josette, are the Shoemaker's children and grandchildren.

David Paul Smith, 58, of Big Sandy, TX, died July 12 of Lou Gehrig's disease. He was the mayor of Big Sandy 1997-2001. He is survived by his wife, Linda, three sons (Shane Andrew Fuquea Smith, Rory Michael David Smith, Rafferty Joseph Strahan Smith), five sisters and four brothers.