

# Together

## Grace Communion International News

September/October 2009

www.wcg.org/together/

Volume 4, Number 5

## Video Programs Highlight the Good News

In our previous issue, we discussed *Speaking of Life*, a series of short video messages by Joseph Tkach. In this issue we cover three additional video series, all of them 25-30 minutes in length.

### You're Included

Since March 2007, GCI Vice-President J. Michael Fezell has conducted nearly 50 interviews for the series titled *You're Included*. Of these interviews, 34 have been posted, and more than a dozen have been recorded but are not yet ready to be released. In addition, Media Director Michael Morrison has hosted two *You're Included* programs.



The late Ray Anderson, professor of theology and ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary, was one of our earliest *You're Included* interviews.

This series is devoted to exploring the practical implications of Trinitarian theology and the good news that God loves you, wants you, and includes you in Jesus Christ.

Each week, more than 1,000 people watch, listen or read the transcript for one of our interviews.

Some of them are burned to a DVD and played in churches or small group settings. And seminary professors have told us they direct their students to our website so they can watch the program.

We feature interviews with the following theologians and authors:

1. The late Dr. Ray Anderson, senior professor of theology and ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary, and author of more than a dozen books on ministry and theology.

2. Dr. Elmer Colyer (shown below), professor of historical theology at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, and author of *How to Read T.F. Torrance*.



Andrew Root, Assistant Professor of Youth and Family Ministry at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN, talks with J. Michael Fezell in the GCI studio shortly before taping a program in the *You're Included* series.

3. Dr. Gerrit Dawson, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, editor of *An Introduction to Torrance Theology* and author of *Jesus Ascended: The Meaning of Christ's Continuing Incarnation*.



4. Dr. Gary Deddo (above), Senior Editor of Academic Publications at InterVarsity Press, Founding President of the T. F. Torrance Theological Fellowship, and author of *Karl Barth's Theology of Relations*.

5. Dr. Chris Kettler, professor of religion at Friends University in Kansas and author of *The God Who Believes: Faith, Doubt, and the Vicarious Hu-*

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**Editor**

Michael Morrison

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Living and Sharing the Gospel

**President**

Joseph Tkach

**Vice President**

Mike Feazell

**Superintendent of Ministers**

Dan Rogers

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manity of Christ.

6. Dr. C. Baxter Kruger (above), founder of Perichoresis and author of *The Great Dance* and other books.



7. Dr. John E. McKenna (right), former professor at Ambassador University, now a professor at Grace Communion Seminary, an adjunct professor of Old Testament at Azusa Pacific University, and author of *The Great Amen of the Great I-Am*.



8. Jeff McSwain (above), founder of Reality Ministries.

9. Paul Metzger (below), Professor of Christian Theology and Theology of Culture at Multnomah University in Portland, Oregon, author of *Consuming Jesus: Beyond Race and Class Divi-*



sions in a Consumer Church, and editor of *Trinitarian Soundings in Systematic Theology*.

10. Dr. Roger Newell (right), associate professor of religious studies at George Fox University in Oregon, and author of *Passion's Progress: The Meanings of Love*.

11. Andrew Root, Assistant Professor Youth and Family Ministry at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and author of *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry and Relationships Unfiltered*.

12. Paul Young (below), author of the best-selling novel *The Shack*. This is our most popular program, with Elmer Colyer running a close second.



**GCI Together**

In August 2008, we began a new series, then called *WCG Together*, of interviews with personnel in our denomination. Many of our employees have fascinating personal and ministry experiences that inspire others. So far we have posted 11 interviews and taped several others. Each week, about 400 people watch or listen to one of them.

This is a great way to get to know the people and the work they are doing. In





director and mission director for our churches in Australia.



### A Word From Our Sponsor

Many pastors have asked that we make video sermons available to be played in local churches

alphabetical order, our interviews include the following:

Eugene Guzon and Rod Matthews (at lower left), mission directors for Asia.

Ted Johnston, director of Generations Ministries.

Kalengule and Nsama Kaoma. He is national director of our churches in Zambia and mission director for Africa.



Gary Moore, national director in Canada and a mission director for southern Africa.

Dan Rogers, director of Church Administration &

Development in the United States.

Pat Shaw (above right), administrative assistant and budget analyst in Church Administration & Development.

Joseph Tkach, president of GCI.

Tammy Tkach (above center), director of women's ministry.

es when the pastor is unable to give the message. We created a series for this purpose called *A Word From Our Sponsor*, with messages so far from Mike Feazell, Michael Morrison and Dan Rogers.

For the first year, this series was available to pastors only, but after each video message has been on the pastoral site for a year, we'll post them on the public website for everyone's benefit. Like our other programs, it is also available in audio.



director in Germany and Austria and a mission director for Europe.

Curtis May (above), director of the Office of Reconciliation Ministries.

John McLean (below), national



## Future events

### Wisconsin Dells, Sept. 17-20

Everyone is invited to the annual Dells Celebration at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, WI, from Sept. 17-20. Our theme is "From Exclusion to Inclusion."

Join us on this four-day journey as we examine four major areas of life where people are commonly unjustly excluded, and as we learn practical ways to include everyone.

For details, see [www.wcg.org/events](http://www.wcg.org/events), or the July-August issue of *Together*.

### Kalamazoo, MI, Nov. 14

The Kalamazoo church invites all who have been members in Kalamazoo to come and celebrate the 40th anniversary of the congregation. The date is Nov. 14, at The Birches, 3082 S. 9th St., Kalamazoo. Church services start at 1:00 p.m.; dinner and activities at 3:00.

The dinner cost is \$15. Send a check to Cathy Sturdivant, 4116 Mt. Olivet, Kalamazoo, MI, 49004. For further information, contact Cathy at [cleo49004@aol.com](mailto:cleo49004@aol.com).



## Missionaries of the [Really] Good News

For the fourth year, Crossing Borders mission camp reached out across the Mexican border with the good news of Jesus Christ. We're grateful that GCI sponsors this camp, because it provides opportunities for people to see how amazingly God is working with a wide variety of programs to accomplish his work in the lives of people of all cultures.

With ongoing American news media reports of violence at the border and of swine flu, we did some research to make sure that our participants would be safe. Border violence in Nuevo Laredo, where we conduct our ministry, had actually decreased by about 75 percent in the past couple of years (although other areas of the border have unfortunately seen an increase). Also, there had been no confirmed cases



of swine flu within 200 miles of our location. So we were glad to get the green light to proceed with the mission outreach camp. Unfortunately, many other church-related groups cancelled their ministry work in Mexico, leaving a large hole in the physical and spiritual provisions for our cross-border neighbors.

During the weeklong camp, we participated in a variety of ministry programs. One day we helped distribute bulk food supplies to about

60 pastors and ministry leaders to take back to their people. Later we handed out individual cooked meals and hygiene supplies to several dozen homeless people living behind garbage dumpsters, on street corners, in parks and under bridges.

One of the homeless was a woman who had been the wife of a pastor. She had made some bad decisions and her life had slipped into immorality and addiction—now living alone on the streets. She felt totally separated from God, worthless and



abandoned by her former friends. It broke our hearts as we tried to convey to her that God still loves her very much as his child, and he has never stopped loving her even for an instant. Unfortunately, her shame,

guilt and performance-based religious teachings are so far blinding her to seeing God's loving face.

During the camp, we saw that many people are not assured of God's love for them and how Jesus has included all in the love of God. They are missing out on the crux of the gospel, so we tried to share the love of the Father in the Son through the Spirit with everyone we met.

Other activities included feedings of large numbers of people, helping

with adult and children's teaching services, praying with people, distributing gospel tracts, skits and music in the public parks, a construction project, and more.

As a new activity this year, we added two afternoons of conducting



At left: congregation at an outdoor service in the pallet city. Center: a Hunger Rescue converted ambulance for feeding the homeless. Above: Consuelo Orduño and other helpers at a children's church service. Photos by Lee Berger, Pedro Orduño and Rick Shallenberger.

a Vacation Bible School for the children of a poverty-stricken "pallet city"—where hundreds of small homes are made of refuse materials and there is no water or electricity. Consuelo and Pedro Orduño and Lucero Villarreal put together an excellent program, and the children thoroughly enjoyed their Bible lessons, songs, games and snacks.

Although the temperatures were hot and the conditions sometimes uncomfortable, our 17 attendees came away with a new love for all of God's children and an increased appreciation for sharing God's transformational truth of his love for everyone.

To find out more about next summer's camp and our winter shoebox ministry, go to [www.cbmission.org](http://www.cbmission.org) or call Lee Berger at 903-653-0992.

*Lee Berger, camp director*

## Spiritual Enrichment Program of Southern California

The Spiritual Enrichment Program of Southern California (SEP So. Cal.) was held Sunday, July 5 through Saturday, July 11, at Cedar Lake Camp in Big Bear, CA.

In all, 260 people participated: 181 campers, 73 staff, and 6 children of staff. Of our campers, about one third were camping with us for the first time. Campers came from California and seven other states. Nineteen GCI congregations were represented, along with 32 congregations in other denominations.

We had the privilege of having John Cardie on staff. John has written a book called *How to Beat Granddad At Checkers*. John taught sound strategy for both checkers and life, helping the campers develop forethought, which will help them make right choices as teenagers and young adults. John accompanied his son and daughter-in-law (they were junior camp counselors) and four grandchildren, who were campers and mini-campers. (In 2008, 9 year-old Colton Cardie was the World Youth Checkers Champion.)

This year, to help foster the development of emerging leaders, we offered a mentoring relationship with our worship leader, Jeremy Ketchum and our chaplain, Glen Weber. We extended this year-long mentoring opportunity to senior campers and staff by having them write an essay telling about their calling, passion and desire for worship leading or church pastoring/planting.

We hope to increase the number and types of mentoring relationships in the future and it is our prayer that local church ministry leaders actively promote, seek and involve themselves in mentoring relationships with emerging leaders.

The junior and senior camps each had four chapel and debrief sessions, daily quiet time and a lot of exciting daytime activities for their age groups.

The junior camp participated in



Christian living classes, parachute games, splashball, mind-teaser puzzles, swimming, canoeing, checkers, teambuilding, creative arts class, prayer journey, drama, hiking, Frisbee golf, darts, and a trip to a local water slide park.

The senior camp participated in Christian living classes, a class in how to read the Bible, dance, canoeing, prayer journey, checkers, basketball, zip line, volleyball, teambuilding, drama, Frisbee golf, and a purity session.

Both camps had a special naming ceremony that led into communion. We drew on the many examples in the Bible where God changed the name of a person to reflect who they were and what God was calling them to be, and we used the illustration from the book and movie, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. At the end of the movie, after the great battle, the four young people were crowned as kings and queens of Narnia and given new names—Peter the Magnificent, Susan the Gentle, Edmund the Just and Lucy the Valiant.

We saw all the campers grow, develop, mature, blossom and flourish during the week. We saw godly characteristics emerge and take a firm position in their lives and personalities. As a result of that growth and to honor how God made them, and their development, we gave each camper a new name.

It was a powerful and moving experience. We told them that God is with them, desiring relationship with them and forming them. Their new name would describe only one characteristic or aspect of many that God will develop within them.

Instead of a high ropes course, the senior camp got to participate in a new zip line called Flying Bear Zip Lines. It is at Cedar Lake and, although open to the public, SEP So. Cal. was able to procure time slots for all the senior campers.

The theme this year was “Oasis.” We used an oasis to symbolize the abundant life-giving relationship with God where living water bubbles forth and brings life, love and acceptance to all who are thirsty.

The desert, in contrast, represented not living in the full reality or refreshment of the living water, and a mirage is anything that gives the illusion of quenching our thirst, but never fulfills.

Our primary message was to let the youth know that God loves them and created them to be in a deep, loving and abiding relationship with him. We talked about many mirages, one of which is the mirage of perceived separation from God. As we abide in the Father’s love and drink the living water, he creates an oasis of life-giving fruit in our lives so that others can come taste and see that the Lord is good.

We emphasized to the campers that they cannot come to camp and fill up a canteen with “God” and hope that it will last them the rest of the year. But rather, that God desires a personal life-giving relationship with them that will naturally produce a thriving oasis in their lives. They will still have desert experiences, but just like in an oasis, there can be peace inside even when there is chaos all around. The water is always available and desiring to spring forth to show that the Father is especially fond of them, that they are eternally loved, included, accepted, forgiven and redeemed.

See [www.sepsocal.org/09](http://www.sepsocal.org/09) for thousands of photos.

*Mark and Anne Stapleton*

### Youth camp in Florida

Youth Camp concluded on Monday, June 8, after four days of inspiration, recreation, friendships and new experiences. Fifty-seven youth campers and 33 adult staff from Florida and Georgia participated. Although there was one day of rain requiring a few schedule changes, most of the weather was pleasant, activities took place as scheduled, and the Lord’s protection, safety and blessing was always upon us.

As part of our Spiritual Enrichment Program, daily chapel messages focused on analogies and lessons from C.S. Lewis’s *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* as dramatized by a recent film. Through this unique teaching tool, teens and pre-teens were able to reflect on what Jesus does for them. At the conclusion of camp, the young people were encouraged to speak with their pastors in their home churches about giving their lives to Jesus and following that up with baptism.

Activities included a zip line and climbing wall, outdoor swimming pool, canoeing and kayaking on the lake, children’s sports and games, basketball, volleyball, BB gun range, archery, arts and crafts, talent show night, dance night, a block party and a novelty-events race. On the last day, the entire group went to

Wildwaters Water Park in Ocala to enjoy the numerous water slides and wave pool. Campers were well fed, as church volunteers prepared and served an abundance of food and filling meals.

Next year’s SEP Florida is scheduled for the first weekend in June. Because of the excellent price we pay to rent the camp, and the volunteer food crew, we can keep our camp costs at only \$135 per camper for the entire four days. Campers can secure a spot by applying in advance by clicking on the “applications” button at our website, [www.sepflorida.com](http://www.sepflorida.com). For more information, call camp director Marty Davey at 904-406-9022.

### Youth camp in Minnesota

At Northern Light Summer Camp in Lanesboro, MN, there were 26 campers and 18 staff members. Activities included: Oneota life, pioneer life, south treetops (for the older campers – the facility’s toughest treetops course), east treetops (for the younger campers), earth exploration, group challenges, archery, minimum impact camping, rock climbing, basic orienteering (for the younger campers), GPS pathfinders (for the older campers) and canoeing. We also held workshops for the campers in arts & crafts, videography, photography, worship leading and prayer journaling.

We started each day with camp devotions led by the campers. It was especially nice to see the depth that developed within the entire group of campers as the devotions were led by the older campers.

A dynamic that contributed to the overall synergy of the camp was the mix of ages for evening workshops. This was the first time in this camp’s history that we mixed campers out of their dorm assignments. We found that the older ones “looked out” for the younger ones and the younger ones looked up to the older ones. The older ones

showed more respect in helping the staff members teach the lessons as well.

*Todd Fox*

### Camp in North Carolina

At Higher Ground 2009, campers not only heard the message of God’s unconditional love for everyone and the life we all share with the Father, Son and Spirit, but they witnessed it also. Seventy staff members from a dozen different church backgrounds served 140 campers and showed how Christians from all denominations can work together, recognizing their shared identity as children of God.

Based on last year’s camper feedback, the chapel messages addressed the reality of the camper’s lives by featuring stories of men and women in the Bible who encountered God and were used by God in spite of their imperfections, age and social status. The chapel theme was “Real Life, Real People, Real Good News.”

Camp activities included dodge ball, paintball, high ropes, water polo, disk golf, and arts & crafts. To foster team spirit and build family bonds, dorm members participated in activities together and sometimes would compete against another dorm. Evenings featured special events such as a talent show, camp dance, praise and worship concert, a magic show and the ever-popular Camo Night.

Jeff McSwain from Reality Ministries in Raleigh visited the camp on Friday to observe how we reach out to



young people in the light of who they already are in Jesus. He was excited about what we are doing and may consider partnering with us next year or running his own camp at the same location.

Higher Ground 2009 filled up in record time. Based on early registrations for 2010, we expect next summer's camp to fill up even faster. The camp website is [www.carolinacamp.com](http://www.carolinacamp.com).

*Paul David Kurts*

### Jacksonville, FL, church hosts reconciliation weekend

Church members, families and guests from Florida and Georgia gathered in Jacksonville, FL, for a two-day reconciliation workshop, June 27-28 (see photo above right). The seminar was presented by Curtis May, director of ORM (the Office of Reconciliation Ministries) for our denomination, who was accompanied by his wife, Jannice.

Just over 70 church members from a variety of ethnicities and backgrounds gathered at the Jacksonville Christian Family Fellowship and GCI church building for the presentations and discussions. Topics presented included: Jesus' dream and his ministry of reconciliation, ORM promotional videos, inventions and contributions of African-Americans, different types of conflict and broken relationships, and solutions and ways to be an ally for healing.

Helpful resources were made available, such as videos, booklets, the book *Mending Broken Relationships*, newsletters and handouts.

The workshop addressed reconciliation in three key ways: recognition and repentance of our individual and national faults, inspiration and encouragement in moving forward, and information and resources for recognizing the need for and accomplishing reconciliation.

Several neighboring GCI pastors were able to attend as part of their continuing education goals, and for their personal instruction and inspiration.

*Marty Davey*



### Women's tea in Snellville, GA

The Women's Ministry of the Christian Family Fellowship was host to a tea on June 27. The event was attended by 60 women and guests. This year we were privileged to have as guest speaker, the Honorable Mayor Evelyn Dixon of Riverdale, GA. Her message was encouraging to all in attendance. She related how she went from being homeless to becoming the mayor of a city. Her message was that God is not limited, and we need to get out of

his way and let him show us what he can do.

Esther Doele spoke on the tsunami in our lives. She reminded us that each of us has a personal problem or tsunami that can be overcome with the help of our heavenly Father.

Gail Beckner gave a message about "Mama Said." She reminded our younger audience to listen to our parents and other adults as well. She reminded the young people that God is there for all of us.

*Carolyn Calhoun*

### Graduations

(These are in addition to the names published in the July/August issue.)

#### High School

Alesha Markie Braswell, James Baxter Hunt Jr. High School, Wilson, NC. National Honor Roll and Young Dreamers Scholarship

Jasmine Feliz Broadnax, The Master's School, Dobbs Ferry, NY

Alexandria Arielle Hodges, Pebble Brook H.S., Mableton, GA

Claire N. Humen, Cranford HS, Cranford, NJ; National Honor Society and French Honor Society

Lilas F. Humen, Cranford HS, Cranford, NJ; National Honor Society, Math Honor Society and French Honor Society

Joseph Joshua Johnston, Paradise High School, Paradise, CA

Patrick Long, Sparta High School, Sparta, MO

Jeffrey Lovedahl, Monmouth High School, Monmouth, IL

Kenneth A. Mohr, Marlboro HS, Marlboro, NJ

Jason Douglas Nichols, Latta H.S., Latta, SC

Amy Lynn Varsell, Lewis Mills High School, Burlington, CT. National Honor Society

#### College Graduations

Kashonta Crawford, B.S. in Biology, Francis Marion University, Florence, SC

Donna Dolsy, Masters in Elementary Education, University of Phoenix in Atlanta

Amaris Evans, Masters in Internal Medicine, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Monica Manuel, M.S. in Professional Counseling, Georgia State University

Sean Mohr, Associate in Business degree from Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, NJ

Dolly Pope, B.S. in Philosophy, Georgia State University

Ashley Rose Smith, Bachelor in English, Summa Cum Laude, Rider University, Lawrenceville, NJ

Tamara Templeman, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design, Parsons The New School for Design, New York, NY

Angela Wilhoite, Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA, B.A. in Business Administration, with honors



## Announcements

### Births

Triplets! **Braden Abner, Jameson Douglas, and Patrick Ray Miller** were born on July 2, the first children for parents Shannon and Ryan Casey. Grandparents Paul and Marlene Miller attend in Mountain Home, AR.

**Kate Sophia Goddard** was born on June 4, the first daughter and second child for Mark David and Daretta (Roller) Goddard, of Rancho Santa Margarita, CA.\*

### Ordinations

Robert Abbas, St. Paul, MN  
Brian Carlisle, Washington, DC  
Lloyd Elwell, Rochester, NY  
Michael Kinzie, Roanoke, VA  
Stuart Mahan, Toledo, OH  
Phil Nichols, Monroeville, AL  
Randy Roberts, Toledo, OH  
Duane Skrove, Champlin, MN  
Ada Wilson, Portsmouth, VA

### Obituaries

**Frances Virginia Magdalene Creech**, 62, died June 29, at home in Snow Hill, NC, surrounded by her children and family. She was born in 1947, the youngest child of William Titus Creech and Mildred Frances Joyner. She married Louis Emerson Creech (a sixth cousin) on Nov. 18, 1965.

Frances was baptized in July 1974 and attended several congregations in North Carolina. Her life centered on her faith, family and home. She took excellent care of her husband during his cancer battle while dealing with her own health issues. During her own cancer battles, she encouraged other cancer patients.

Frances is survived by her four children, Rebecca Ann Creech Chahid and husband, Ali; Frances Louise Creech Price and husband, Walter; Samson Louis Creech and

Jeffrey Emerson Creech; four grandchildren; two brothers and their wives; a stepmother, Sally Creech; and stepbrother and wife. She was preceded in death by her husband, who died Oct. 8, 2008.\*

**Roger William Robb, 85**, of Industry, IL, died on May 26 in Tulsa, OK, while en route to a grandson's wedding in Texas. He was born in Minnesota in 1924 to William and Ella (Kautz) Robb. He attended Bemidji State University before entering the U.S. Navy in 1943. He married Francis Barmus in 1946. He retired from the Navy in 1964 with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He completed his education in mathematics at the University of Scranton, and taught in several high schools in Pennsylvania before buying a farm near New York Mills, MN. In 2003, he married Ila Steiner of Industry.

Preceding Roger in death are his wife, Francis Robb, his parents and a brother, Clyde. He is survived by his wife, Ila, and three sons: Randolph W. Robb of San Rafael, CA, Roger William Robb II and Richard W. Robb, both of Mt. Pleasant, MI; a brother, Thomas (Phyl) Robb, of Isle; three sisters: Marjorie Robb of New York Mills; Marion Horstman of Port Angeles, WA, and Lou (Howard) Legried of New York Mills; four grandchildren, three great grandchildren, and many others.\*

**Gary D. Schmidt, 57**, of rural Kendall, WI, died suddenly on May 25. He was the son of Donald and Alice Schmidt and the youngest of their eight children. He married Diane Snitker from Waukon, IA, on Sept. 3, 1972. Gary and Diane farmed for several years and purchased the farm in 1994. Gary drove a school bus for 21 years and was Transportation Supervisor for two years. He

attended Living Faith Fellowship in La Crosse, WI.

Gary is survived by his immediate family—his wife, his son Justin (wife, Emily) and his daughter Jennifer (husband, Rod Weise). He is also survived by six siblings and a host of nephews, nieces and their families.\*

**John Luther Snyder, Jr., 77**, of Bay City, TX, died on Feb. 15 due to complications suffered from a heart infection. He was born in Houston, TX, July 7, 1931, to John and Hilda Snyder. John received a Masters of Science from Texas A&M University Kingsville (formerly Texas College of Arts & Industry).

John attended Ambassador College in Pasadena, CA, and later transferred to Big Sandy, TX, where he was responsible for running the college dairy. He later returned to Bay City where he owned and operated a small engine repair shop for over 20 years. He spent his final years in assisted living in Frisco, TX, with Parkinson's disease.

He is survived by his sister Dorothy Lof-ton of Houston, step-daughter Lenora Feeney of San Antonio, step-son L. Greg Smith of Big Sandy and son John Snyder III, of Frisco. John had seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.\*

**Agatha M. Youtzy, 94**, of Belmont, WV, died Jan. 21 after a short illness. She was born April 26, 1914 at Mellin, WV, the daughter of the late Harry and Margaret Hoover Moore. She was a homemaker and a member of Grace Fellowship in Mineral Wells, WV. She is survived by two sisters, Burneda Roberts and Jenivieve W. Woods. She was preceded in death by her husband John, an infant son and seven brothers and sisters.\*

\* See [www.wcg.org/together/09/sep/announce.htm](http://www.wcg.org/together/09/sep/announce.htm) for photos and more information.