



United News Philippines

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News of the United Church of God, an International Association - Philippines

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May/June 2004

32 Campers Learn Character in “the Best Camp Ever!”

DAVAO CITY—Thirty-two campers and 29 staff members from ten congregations in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao gathered here at Eden Nature Park from May 16 to 23 for the sixth annual United Youth Camp sponsored by the United Church of God, an International Association, in the Philippines.

The theme of this year’s camp was “Character Counts.” Before the start of camp, each camper was given “The UYC Camper Code.” Patterned after the Boy Scout Law, it was developed to remind them of twelve character qualities—that of being trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

Each of the 32 campers (more than half of which were new) was assigned to one of four “dorms”—two boys dorms (1B and 2B) and two girls dorms (1G and 2G); a counselor and an assistant counselor were also assigned to each dorm. Each dorm of eight campers and counselors stayed in two five-man tents and was assigned their own two-burner gas stove and cooking utensils.

The day began at 5 a.m. with “Quiet Time,” a time for prayer and Bible study. Then at 6 a.m., campers would shower, get ready, and prepare breakfast. Each



A group shot of the UYC 2004 Philippine campers and staff (photo by Susan Igloria)

an emotional bond with the other campers within the dorm. At other times, dorms would invite each other and would combine forces to help one another, share meals, and share the workload. Self-reliance, cooperation, and teamwork were evident as the dorms hustled to get ready for the activities of the day.

Each morning began with Christian Living sessions, tackling each of the top five issues relevant to the teens. Edmond Macaraeg, the camp director, introduced each day’s topic using a 15-minute role-play of two parts: the wrong way and the right way. This was followed by 45 minutes of discussion, and then a 30-minute lecture on the subject from the Bible. The five topics were on dating outside the faith; peer pressure on drugs, alcohol, and smoking; peer pressure on lifestyle choices, fashion, and music; Sabbath and Holy Day compromise; and responsibility. The staff did the first role-play, followed by each of the four dorms.

Following the Christian Living session, each of the campers moved on with their individual and dorm schedule for that day. There were eight

workshops (Arts & Crafts, Carpentry, Cooking & Baking, Electricity, Flower Card Making, Journalism, Paper Card Making, and Public Speaking) and eight sports activities (Cycling, Inline Skating, Riflery, Softball, Soccer, Swimming, Table Tennis, and Volleyball). There was also a First Aid class for everyone, and a challenging day of hiking, outdoor cooking using bamboo, and an obstacle course which included slushing one’s way through a 100-foot mud tunnel.

The evening activities were more relaxing: Orientation Night; Novelty Games; Career & Personality Discovery; Masculinity & Femininity Seminar; Fellowship Time; an Ice Cream & Pizza Night; a video showing of Pam Stenzel’s

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camper had an assigned duty such as cooking, washing dishes, doing the laundry, cleaning the restrooms, etc. The dorm acts like a family, doing their own chores, eating together, and developing

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Editorial

by David Baker, *Philippine Senior Pastor*

Visit to the Philippines and Myanmar

During the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread I had an opportunity to travel to the Philippines and Myanmar to meet with our members and *Good News* subscribers. This trip was to be my first opportunity to meet many of the brethren in northern Mindanao.

After traveling for more than twenty hours I arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila late Wednesday evening, March 31. Once I cleared immigration and customs, I was greeted by Rey and Cynthia Evasco. Mr. Evasco is the director of the Bureau of Patents in the Intellectual Property Office, which is under the Office of the President. He also pastors the Manila congregation. It is always a wonderful and comforting experience to be welcomed to the Philippines by the Evascos. The following morning I was able to enjoy breakfast with Mr. Evasco and catch up on the news of the work and church in Manila. After our breakfast Rey drove me to the airport for an early afternoon flight to Davao City in Mindanao. Mr. Edmond Macaraeg, pastor of Mindanao, met me at the airport in Davao City. Later in the evening, the Macaraeg family treated me to a delightful dinner at their home.

On Friday, April 2, Edmond Macaraeg, his son, Charles and I departed Davao for Butuan City in northern Mindanao. Butuan is one of the earliest known place of settlement and sea trade in the Philippines. In 1976 the oldest boat in the Philippines—a *balangay* (sea going outrigger) was discovered in the area of Butuan. Its remains have been carbon dated to A.D. 320. The trip from Davao to Butuan normally takes at least 5 to 6 hours by car. During our trip we stopped and visited some of the members along the way. In Bunawan we visited the families of Carlos and Daisy Mantabala, and David and Rodelyn Obsequio. They have a tailoring and carpentry business. In Prosperidad we visited the family of Elbert Gargar. In addition to Elbert being a licensed agriculturalist and Florabelle, a civil engineering technician, they have a small radio station in their home that serves the community of Prosperidad. As we drove along the road to Butuan, we were surrounded by beautiful rice fields bordered by palm and banana trees. It is also a common sight to see the fields being worked by carabao (water buffalo). Other unusual sights for a westerner were truckloads of bananas




on their way to the market and motorcycles outfitted with a platform [known as motorcycle “sky-lab” by the local town people] that would allow up to ten passengers or several large sacks of rice. The ability to balance such loads with a small motorcycle is truly amazing! Shortly after sunset we arrived in Butuan and enjoyed dinner with some of the local church leaders in the area.

On April 3, seventy-five members from Butuan, Prosperidad, Bunawan and Diatagon gathered for the Sabbath. After the morning service we enjoyed a catered meal followed by a Bible study in the afternoon. It was a very special Sabbath for me as this was my first opportunity to meet many of the brethren from this area. In the evening we enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of Paul and Merlyn Cebrian. Paul is a deacon and is a tremendous help to Mr. Macaraeg in northern Mindanao. On Sunday we visited members in Jabonga, Santiago, and Cabadbaran in Agusan del Norte. We enjoyed a lovely meal at each location. (I always have to try to lose weight when I return from the Philippines!) As we traveled to visit with the members I saw slogans stating *Mabuhay NPA* or long live the NPA (New People’s Army—a communist rebel group that has been operating in the Philippines for the past 30 years) demonstrating that the movement is very much alive and operating in northern Mindanao. In the evening Mr. Macaraeg and I conducted the Passover service for the brethren in Butuan.

On Monday morning, April 5, we visited the national museum in Butuan City and viewed a model of the *balangay* (sea going outrigger). It is believed that the Filipinos migrated from Indonesia to the Philippines and the boatloads of people formed small communities that became known as *barangays*. We also saw Chinese pottery dating from A.D. 1000 and a replica of a golden Buddha from India showing that early trade existed between the Philippines

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Photos by Charles Macaraeg / Camp photos by Serizalino Dizon, Meryl Macaraeg

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“Sex Has a Price Tag,” and a Variety Show & Dance. The Sabbath activities consisted of an Open Forum & Bible study, a Bible bowl, Sabbath services, and more fellowship time.

One night that was quite unforgettable by most was when each camper and staff participated in writing on a small book with 60 blank pages, with its cover decorated by the owner representing his/her own personality. Everyone sat around in a circle and passed the books around as each one wrote something nice and encouraging about the person whose book was in front of them. Only 90 seconds was given to write in each book, but there was some delay so it took more than three hours to finish, lasting an hour past midnight! When the books got back to the owners, there were tears and hugs—many felt closer and bonded together, and this lasted until the final day of camp, when, amidst the joyful yells came the tear-filled eyes.



Practically all of the campers and staff have said this was the *best* camp ever! Let us hear the testimony of two campers:

“On May 20, 2004, Thursday, at about 7:30 p.m., Mr. Edmond D. Macaraeg, our camp director, introduced us to the night’s activity, the Fellowship Time. He instructed each one of us to prepare our own booklet which was given to us earlier. Each booklet contained 60 leaves and was made up of coupon bond cut in one-fourth, stapled and bound. He told us to pass the booklet to our right seatmate and receive the other booklet from the left and write positive and honest comments about the owner of the booklet, then pass it again to the right until one eventually received his/her own booklet. The time limit for each booklet was one minute and 30 seconds.

With all the tiredness from the day’s workshops and activities, plus the distress added by the cool breeze slowly blowing on our skin, writing for each one was not an easy task. But thanks to the kitchen staff who helped us keep awake by serving hot drinks and biscuits. And of course, to the Almighty God who really inspired us in keeping on.

It took us about 4-5 hours to finish all the booklets. But one can clearly see tired eyes suddenly sparkle with joy when they began reading their own booklets. The sleepiness was gone! Many campers began hugging each other with their heartfelt thanks and others by simply shaking hands. Since it was already early in the morning, we were instructed by our camp director to take our rest and prepare ourselves for

the next day’s activities which was Wilderness Skills and Confidence Course. Many of us slept very inspired and in “cloud nine.”

It was really great that the organizers of this camp came up with this idea. I think we had just fulfilled part of a commandment in Hebrews 10:

24-25 which states, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” The other part of the command applies to the one who received the encouragement. We should show the evidence of LOVE and GOOD WORKS toward our brethren.

And now, as we go on to the world full of misery, troubles, and discouragements to live each of our own mortal lives, let us not forget the ULTIMATE PURPOSE of our lives, why we are here. God is refining us for His coming Kingdom. And always remember that there is no refining that is not fiery. It is normal for us Christians to experience fiery trials. When we get discouraged and distressed, let us all encourage one another and go hand in hand at this period of refining so that at the end we may all emerge as PURE GOLD.”

—Aunell Ross R. Angcos
1B, Davao City

“Character Counts” and it really does! This is the theme of the camp this year. Character is the foundation of our life. This is the most important aspect in our life in which our future depends on. This is what the United Youth Camp emphasizes in our life.

The camp aims to develop and improve our character and sure it does! I have to admit that this camp had a huge impact and influence in my life. I never knew how discouraging my character was until I joined this camp. In fact, I’ve done bad things in my past days. I now realize life is worth living.

Every day in the camp was filled by spectacular experiences which was one of a kind. Every moment which I



treasure added up to my knowledge in building up the foundation of my character. Indeed, this is the experience of a lifetime. It is not just an ordinary experience, but the type of getting along with friends and God. Together in developing character such as trustworthiness, loyalty, helpfulness, friendliness, courtesy,

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and many countries in Asia. By mid morning we departed for Cagayan de Oro traveling along the beautiful coastline of northern Mindanao and over a coastal mountain offering beautiful panoramic views of the coast from Butuan to Cagayan de Oro. As we were nearing the city of Cagayan de Oro, we passed the Del Monte pineapple-processing plant which processes pineapples from plantations comprising 95 square kilometers. In 1942 when General Douglas MacArthur was ordered to leave the Philippines, he boarded a PT boat at Corregidor and traveled to Cagayan de Oro. In Cagayan de Oro he boarded a plane at Del Monte airfield and flew to Australia.

Monday evening we enjoyed a wonderful evening of fellowship as we observed the Night to be Much Observed with some of the brethren in Cagayan de Oro. The following day eighty-two brethren from Cagayan de Oro, Maramag, Kiara and Banisilian gathered together to observe the First Day of Unleavened Bread. Some of the members actually traveled over 300 kilometers on the back of a flatbed truck in order to attend the Holy Day service.

It was a wonderful opportunity to be able to spend the Passover and First Day of Unleavened Bread with our brethren in northern Mindanao. They are incredibly friendly and hospitable people with a beautiful teachable attitude. It is always a blessing to spend time with our Filipino brethren and spending the Holy Days with them is very special.

Wednesday, April 7, I had an early morning departure from Cagayan de Oro with Mr. Macaraeg on a flight to Manila. In Manila I said goodbye to Mr. Macaraeg. Mr. Macaraeg is a gracious host and a diligent servant to the brethren in Mindanao. After a brief visit with Rey and Cynthia Evasco, I boarded a flight to Yangon via Bangkok.

I arrived in Yangon the capital of Myanmar at 7:00 p.m. This was my first visit to Myanmar and I was delighted to visit a *Good News* subscriber that I have corresponded with for the past two years. I was also hoping to travel up to Kalaymyo to visit other *Good News* subscribers but plans are not always easy to bring to fruition in Myanmar. A military junta has ruled Myanmar since 1962 so I was a bit concerned about their attitude toward American visitors. However I was very surprised by the openness and friendliness of the people. I actually stayed at the Liberty Hotel, a small inexpensive hotel on Pyay Road. The hotel derives its name from the Statute of

Liberty and some of the teak wood furniture was decorated with carvings of the famous statute. Being from New York, I felt right at home.

On Thursday afternoon I met Roger Than Maung, a *Good News* subscriber. Roger has carefully read most of our literature and is currently receiving our sermon tapes. Roger has a Baptist background and has studied theology for seven years. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Theology from Zomi Theological College located in the northern Chin State and a Masters of Divinity from Myanmar Institute of Theology in Yangon. Roger also teaches part time at a theology school in Yangon. We had many very interesting discussions during my visit. I accompanied Roger to his home and met his wife (she is expecting their first child next month) and other individuals interested in the United Church of God. This was their first

time to observe the Days of Unleavened Bread. After a brief introduction I was asked to give some words of encouragement to the small group. Since it was their first time to observe the Days of Unleavened Bread, I discussed the history and meaning of the feast.

Friday Roger and I toured the city of Yangon. We began by walking through People’s Park then we toured Shwedagon Paya

(pagoda) —the most sacred of all Buddhist sites in Myanmar. It supposedly enshrines some of the hairs of Buddha. It is the symbol of Myanmar. Rudyard Kipling called it “a golden mystery... a beautiful winking wonder.” It is 318 feet tall and covered in gold leaf at the bottom and gold plates at the top. The very top is encrusted with 4,351 diamonds weighing 1800 carats in total. The very top of the structure is tipped with a single 76-carat diamond. Its current form dates back to 1769. During our walk we discussed many aspects of being a Christian in a Buddhist country as well as a deeper discussion of the beliefs and practices of the United Church of God.

On the Sabbath I returned to Roger’s house for Sabbath services. We followed the format of services established by the church. Even though the hymns were sung in the Burmese language they sounded very familiar because many of the hymns they sang were in the Bible Hymnal (old gray hymnal) of the Radio Church of God. Roger gave a sermonette on the meaning of the Days of Unleavened Bread and I gave a sermon discussing various aspects of United Church of God, our philosophy in terms of preaching the gospel and caring for the church. I also drew a distinction between the church



Mr. David Baker (5th from right at back) with Cagayan de Oro Church members during his visit in Northern Mindanao (photo by Charles Macaraeg)

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of God and the many Protestant churches of the world. It was wonderful to spend the Sabbath with a group of people just learning about the truth of the gospel.



Roger Than Maung (right) with his group in Myanmar (photo by Mr. David Baker)

On Sunday and Monday, the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, I spent more time with Roger discussing many aspects of the church. Roger is very excited about the truth and has a great desire to spread the gospel in some of the remote parts of Myanmar. I look forward to returning to Myanmar and spending more time with Roger and the small group that has a sincere desire to learn more of God’s way of life. I hope that you will join me in praying for them as God continues to work in their lives. The country of Myanmar faces many challenges and the challenges that Roger faces will be even greater as he tries to serve God in a predominantly Buddhist country ruled by a military junta. ■

Updates from the Visayas and Sabah, Malaysia

by Florante Siopan

The membership in Leyte continues to grow when God called two more individuals into His Church. Two weeks before the Passover, a couple committed themselves to follow God and His way of life.

A couple, Jose Campos and his wife, Deodita were baptized by Florante Siopan, assisted by Raul Villacote and witnessed by a number of brethren in the clear seashore of Tacloban. The couple has started attending the Sabbath services a few weeks after the F.O.T. in 2003.

The Passover and First Day of Unleavened Bread were held at the annex building of the house of Candido Merino, a church deacon. Twenty-eight baptized members of Leyte congregations attended the Passover service.

On the First Day of Unleavened Bread, God also added one more laborer in His work when Raul Villacote was ordained an elder witnessed by the whole congregation of Leyte, who attended on a combined whole day service. Mr. Villacote will assist Florante Siopan, pastor of the Visayas in attending to the needs of the two churches, one Bible study area, and the scattered brethren in Leyte province.

On Wednesday, April 27, Mr. and Mrs. Siopan began their plan to visit the brethren in Sabah, Malaysia. They stayed overnight in Zamboanga City and the following day, Thursday, they took the Weesam Express, a fastcraft ferry that would bring them to Sabah. The following morning, Friday, they reached Sandakan very early and then took the bus to Semporna town where most of the members are located. Reaching Semporna at 2:00 in the afternoon, they were met by the Beto Family. A joyful fellowshiping and question and answer session followed until dinnertime.

The following day, Sabbath, the services and Bible study was attended by 24 people, including minors, who attentively listened to the messages. The next day after the open forum, Emem Chiu, a member, asked for the blessing of her six-month old daughter.

A series of Bible study and fellowshiping was held until May 5 when the second Passover was held the night before. Four baptized members partook the ceremony since they were not able to partake the first Passover on April 5, 2004.

Plans are underway for a number of brethren from Sabah to attend the F.O.T. in Iloilo, Philippines.

Mr. and Mrs. Siopan left Sabah on their return trip on Friday, May 7, after an overnight stay in Sandakan, Sabah. Arriving Zamboanga on the night of Friday, they took the bus for a night trip to Dipolog and Dapitan to catch up with the boat that would leave for Dumaguete. Finally, Mr. and Mrs. Siopan reached Bacolod Sunday at 10:00 in the evening. ■



Raul Villacote and his wife, Marita (2nd & 3rd from left) were among the eight in Leyte who were baptized last July 2001 (photo by Richard Macaraeg)

Holy Day Attendance in the Philippines

Church Areas	Passover	DUB-1	DUB-7	Pentecost
Northern Luzon	13	20	26	30
Manila	32	81	62	72
Visayas	46	89	79	89
Mindanao	147	257	266	275
TOTAL	238	447	433	466

“Character Counts”

by Edmond Macaraeg

The theme for United Youth Camps this year is: “Character Counts.” This subject is vital not only for our campers but for all of us. Without this righteous, godly, spiritual character developed in us, we cannot be part of God’s family. That’s how vitally important it is!

Massive ignorance and deception

While God gives us free-will, godly character is something which even God cannot give us by fiat! Does that shock you? This is something which most religionists do not understand. Because of deception, most were led to believe that salvation is just like accepting the offer of a piece of candy. They erroneously believe that there is nothing more for us to do—except to simply believe. If this were so, Satan and all the demons would surely be saved because they not only believe but even tremble. But that is not what James 2:19 shows. Instead, godly character development involves diligent work and *obedience*, accompanied with great reverence [fear and trembling] concerning our calling (Phil. 2:12).

What is character?

The best definition of “character” which I came across is the one developed by the late Herbert W. Armstrong, a great religious leader and teacher. In essence he said that, “Character is the ability of an entity to distinguish right from wrong and the power to choose and do right in spite of the pressure to do wrong.” A simple yet practical definition.

Why does character count?

To properly answer this question in the proper context, we need to understand first what is the ultimate plan and purpose of God? What is God like, and what has He been doing? Why did He create the universe and angelic beings prior to mortal man? And what is the role of “character” in all these? (*Our free booklet, What Is Your Destiny? and our Bible Study Course can shed some light to these questions. Please download from the Internet or request for your free copy.*)

For those who have some advanced knowledge on these matters, we know that God is building His own spiritual family kingdom composed of beings who have developed a character similar and attuned to God’s. Unknown to most, we are destined to be His sons and daughters (2 Cor. 6:18), and to be of the same composition as Jesus Christ at His coming (1 John 3:2), thereby truly classifying us as Christ’s brethren (Heb. 2:10, 11), and to rule with Him in His Kingdom (Rev. 5:10; 20:6) given to Him by the Father (Dan. 7:13, 14).

The seeming paradox

But we, the people whom God is now calling and preparing to rule with Him, are surprisingly not the mighty nor

noble ones of this world (1 Cor. 1:26-29)! Another surprise is that while converted ones are already justified by the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9), and reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10), why are we not yet brought to our reward in His Kingdom? What is still lacking in each of us? What is God still waiting for and fashioning in each of us?

Is great wisdom, ability, length of experience, and powerful personality the criteria? Not necessarily so, but there is something more to that. Let’s get a clue in answer to this question from a case in biblical history. Actually, there was such a being who had all these great qualities. Prior to his fall, he was better known in Latin as Lucifer, but after his rebellion as Satan. We can read about his great attributes in Ezekiel 28:12-15. But why was he expelled (verse 16) from such high position of power and authority? Verse 17 shows he became proud and rebelled against God. Yes, Satan had wisdom, experience, beauty and ability—great qualities—but *not the godly righteous spiritual character*.



In contrast, let us see the biblical narrative of a young Hebrew who was forcibly sold away as a slave by his brothers, and note the difference. As a result of choosing to do right in obedience to God’s law—in spite of the daily temptation from his master’s wife to commit adultery with her, he was falsely accused and was unjustly cast into the king’s prison. This young man with godly character was called Joseph and this part of his life’s story is found in Genesis chapter 39. When the time came, because he had godly character, God caused him to suddenly rise to the top of the greatest empire on earth at that time, Egypt. Also, God used him as the agent in saving the fledgling nation of Israel (his own family and relatives) from extermination during the seven years of famine in that region.

Please note that the obvious difference between these two examples is faithful *obedience* to God’s law—which develops the mind and character of God in us. It is not just ability, experience, or wisdom, but *godly character* in us. In God’s eyes, this is the real thing that counts! Whatever we may lack in wisdom, experience, ability and power, God can easily give that to us in an instant—but not the godly character which we have to personally develop.

How is this godly character developed?

God has set before us two ways or principles of life. Humans are required to make many choices every day. Deuteronomy 30:15 says, “See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction.” Verse 19 adds and admonishes: “blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.”

As we live in this world and make daily decisions. God is watching how we conduct and prioritize our lives. In

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Comments from Our Good News Readers



I am very well pleased to continue receiving *The Good News* magazine, which is so important and gives me all information around the world.

But above all, I'm learning to live as a true Christian in the real sense of the word CHRISTIAN and to know more about the true message of the Bible in its entirety, which is so vital, not only in our earthly life but the life thereafter.

N.O., Sampaloc

...I am sharing your information-packed magazine with my family and friends here in Benguet. Please keep up the good work!

M.T.B., Benguet

Ever since, it has always been my dream to have a profound understanding on the Bible. This is why I was so glad upon receiving my copy of *The Good News*, featuring a free Bible study course, which details the Bible and life itself.

Although I am a Catholic, I am continually fascinated by the thoughts you have Biblically extracted from the Sacred Scriptures to provide meaningful answers to human dilemmas.

I hope I can receive my first of the twelve [*Bible Study Course*] lessons. I pray to God that your pastoral works will be broadened to all people that need spiritual direction like me.

M.B., Santo Tomas

...I have no access to Internet but I spend enough time reading daily [the] Bible, *The Good News* magazines and booklets. They are all helpful for spiritual growth. God is gracious because, at 70, I remain strong by reading those materials I discovered. I repented on my past sins, now I see sins of the world. You are a gift to me today!

G.C., Dagupan

Thanks! God bless you all for reaching out to some brethren who are still in the dark. God used you to serve as a light and way to know the real truth...

M.C., La Trinidad

I thank the Lord so much for blessing me with your free magazines and literature. I really enjoy reading it, especially those materials having end-time prophecies like the *U.S. & Britain in Bible Prophecy*. I want to be acquainted with these because different Christian doctrines differ in their interpretation, so I want to prove it to myself that I may be warned and encouraged at the same time to pursue the Lord more and to make me effective in sharing the Gospel. Also, I want to teach this truth to my acquaintances.

J.L.S., Buiyagan, La Trinidad

I was truly amazed on how God is working in my life now. I am a Christian from a local congregation in our province and I have so much desire of knowing God more intimately.

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kindness, obedience, cheerfulness, thriftiness, bravery, cleanliness, and reverence. Imagine life and every person with character... what a pleasant life we would have. This proves that character really counts.

I love this camp, as if I don't want to go home and I am gonna do this forever. If I could describe it in one word, it would be "awesome." But the truth is there's nothing in this world that could explain what every camper feels. You have to experience it for yourself. Every activity involves mental, physical, social and spiritual aspects. I have never been fit in every aspect of my life but I know this will take me to another level and lead me to a better life under the inspiration of God.



As the camp ends, a new challenge is beginning, a challenge of doing what I have learned to make the most of everything through God's ways. As I go home, I will cherish everything especially my friends who eventually became my family. Even though we may all take different roads, we all will be in one path and that's the path of righteousness toward God's Kingdom."

—Joshua E. Infantado
2B, Kidapawan City

—Reported by Daniel Macaraeg

Editor's Note: More articles related to this year's camp will be covered in our upcoming United Teens Philippines 2004 issue

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Matthew 6:33, Christ advises us in the context of pursuing the basic necessities in life, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." This process of godly character development follows the principle of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7); corresponding also with the law of cause-and-effect. Quoted below is a maxim on this important subject:

*Sow a thought, and reap an act;
Sow an act, and reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and reap a character;
Sow a character, and reap a destiny.*

Our ultimate destiny is to be part of the supreme family of God and to rule in His mighty Kingdom forever. But that is possible only if we have developed godly righteous character. And that is where ultimately—character counts! ■

Philippine Web Site Redesigned

The national Web site of the United Church of God, IA-Philippines has recently been redesigned. Sporting a new look and feel, the site includes a menu structure similar to that of the UCGIA Web site.

The Philippine site caters to literature requests for *The Good News*, *Bible Study Course*, *World News and Prophecy*, and *Vertical Thought* subscriptions as well as our other Church-related publications. It also includes the broadcasts of the weekly radio program called the “Good News of the World Tomorrow” hosted by Davao Pastor Edmond Macaraeg, which can either be streamed or downloaded for playback later in RealAudio. (You will need the free RealPlayer program installed on your computer to listen to the broadcasts.)

A search function is also available at the site’s home page.

To visit the UCGIA-Philippines Web site, simply enter **ucg.org.ph** at the address bar. (You will need an Internet browser that supports JavaScript and CSS. Most new versions are capable of these features and are free for download.)

—Richard Macaraeg



Home page of the UCGIA-Philippines Web site

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I am grateful to say that your publications had helped me a lot to sustain my spiritual cravings of the knowledge from God... I even got the chance to share your publication with my friends.

Thank you so much for the great effort you’re rendering to other people. It is really appreciated...

Anonymous

...I have been reading your [Good News] magazine for two years now. I really thank you for it. I really learned a lot, not only I, but my whole family as well. I also keep sharing it with my friends. I really can assure you that your magazine won’t be wasted and was not wasted for the past two years...

P. S. Your magazine is a TREASURE! Thank you for sending it to me!

M.J.B.C., Maco, Comval Province

...It is my profound joy to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you in the staff of *The Good News* for sending me a copy of your very interesting and beautiful booklet. I’m very glad to receive and read it. It is my fervent hope and prayer that everything is well with you and may God continue to bless you as you continue serving others in order for them to learn about God personally. I am so blessed and grateful above all to our Awesome Almighty God.

May this simple note be acceptable and may give you thoughts of how delighted and happy I am. I am hoping to get to know more messages from *The Good News*...

G.D.P.S., Dumaguete City

I have read some of your booklets and I find them simple, direct to the point and understandable to my comprehension. I only borrowed those booklets then and I was not able to read them fully and well because I had to return them to the owner. That’s why I am humbly requesting you to give me a personal copy of some of your booklets, please...

M.B.S., Bugias, Benguet

I want to say thank you so much for giving an opportunity to all the people who want to learn more of our God. I say to you that I am one of the people who are searching for the truth about our loving Savior Jesus Christ... While I was reading the magazine, I learned a lot, not only about God but also what and why things had happened and will be happening.

M.O., Santol, La Union

I’m 19 years old and I live in the Philippines. I want to thank you for sending me *The Good News*. I really like to read it especially the January/February issue about the “Dating Debate.” This is very a big help to everyone especially the young people nowadays. Until here and may God bless all of you.

Internet

God bless you for spreading *The Good News*! I learned about your magazine from a friend. I just started browsing and before I knew it, I read from cover to cover! I am a Catholic since birth and after all these years I felt that there’s still so much to learn about God. Your magazine helped me answer some of the questions. I would like to receive all the booklets you offered in your magazine. It would be of great help. Thank you!

Internet

Good morning... I am one of your recipients of your very inspiring [Good News] magazine. I just want to say thanks and keep it up! I really need such inspiration especially in this time of troubled life that I have. God Bless to all...

Text Message

Hi good day! I just want to say THANK YOU for *THE GOOD NEWS* magazine that I received regularly for FREE... It’s a blessing to my family & me. I hope to be one of your supporters soon.

Text Message