

## **Home Office Update** **April 24, 2003**

Dear Brethren,

I trust that all of you had an inspiring and uplifting spring Holy Day season as we did here. It was wonderful to again be able to observe God's annual festivals after a six-month pause since the Feast of Tabernacles. Norma and I attended Passover and the First Day of Unleavened Bread in Cincinnati. We then traveled to Indianapolis, Indiana, for the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. We enjoyed very much meeting with 250 brethren from the Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Terre Haute and Lafayette congregations, and spending time with the pastors from those churches, Darris and Debbie McNeely and Victor and Beverly Kubik. Reports from other congregations were equally exciting.

Later in this report you will read about the preliminary reported figures for the offering and attendance for the First Day of Unleavened Bread. It is most encouraging to see the growth since last year! Attendance was up 3 percent over last year, and the offering was up 4.6 percent. Total U.S. attendance topped 13,000! We are grateful for these increases and thank God first and foremost for providing this growth. We also want to sincerely thank our brethren for their generosity in these offerings, especially considering the difficult economic times in which we live.

In this Home Office Update, you will again read numerous reports about what is taking place. I also wanted to briefly mention a couple of other items of interest. One is with regards to our Web site and the new design that has been in place during the last few weeks. Since the new design came on-line, the average number of visits per day has grown from approximately 4,000 to 5,200—a 30 percent increase. Perhaps more importantly, the average amount of time a visitor is spending on United's site has grown from 6 minutes to 8.5 minutes—a 42 percent increase! This is an extremely cost-effective way for people to read our literature, or to begin their own subscription to the *Good News*. Please continue to pray that God will use this tool to draw more people to His truth.

The other item I wanted to mention pertains directly to the youth of the Church. For about 2 1/2 years now, United has been producing an on-line magazine for young people titled *Youth United*. It has had a good, solid start and managing editor David Treybig and his staff are to be commended for their excellent articles about key issues for our youth. Also, during the last eight years, the Cincinnati North congregation has produced a printed publication titled *Us Teens*. This has been a fine publication, enjoying a wide circulation, devoted primarily to sharing news about young people, as well as providing biblical material. Jim O'Brien (pastor of Cincinnati North) and his team are also to be complimented for their years of dedicated service to our youth in this way.

In early April, Peter Eddington and I had a meeting with David and Jim (along with Mike Bennett, Doug Horchak, Richard Pinelli and Matthew Fenchel) about merging the two publications into one that would appear in print and on-line. It was a very positive and energetic meeting, with numerous ideas going back and forth. As a result, we are happy to announce that, beginning in the fall of 2003, the first issue of this new magazine will be produced and sent to all young people in United on a quarterly basis. (Of course, this is subject to the General Conference of Elders approving the operation plan and budget.) There are still numerous details to be worked out, but we are very excited with this development. The emphasis and focus of both publications will be retained in the new magazine. There will continue to be a wealth of biblical material to spiritually nurture our young people, as well as a dedicated section highlighting youth events in United, inspiring examples of young people, etc. More details will be announced as the summer goes along.

In less than a week, elders will begin arriving from around the world for the annual meeting of the General Conference of Elders. Chairman Clyde Kilough will discuss more about that in his letter next week. Please, though, be praying for this meeting and the decisions that the eldership needs to make.

*Roy Holladay*

### **Ambassador Bible Center**

With the Passover season came also the semester break for the Ambassador Bible Center students. They have had just over two weeks to observe the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread—many returning home to be with families—before coming back to complete this fourth year of ABC, which will wrap up in August.

The students sponsored a luncheon for the home office staff before doing their part in deleavening the ABC portion of the home office facility. They also held a '50s dance that was open to any in the immediate Cincinnati area. Around 100 were in attendance, decked out in the typical '50s attire. I even found a letterman's sweater (too small for me now) that dated back to 1956!

The students helped out the Red Cross with a project, handed out refreshing water at a run to raise money for a worthy humanitarian cause and prepared several care packages for some of the elderly in the Cincinnati area. It has been a very good year thus far, and we expect to complete the year on a good note.

The resident faculty have been busy during the break, though a different kind of busy. Ralph Levy helped out with the Passover in the United Kingdom and will spend the remainder of the time visiting his family in Malta. Matthew Fenchel handled the Passover and spoke on the First Day of Unleavened Bread in Dayton, Ohio, and spoke in Louisville, Kentucky, for the last Holy Day. I conducted Passover in Louisville and shared services in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with Don Henson for the last Holy Day.

We have now accepted eight students for 2004, with a few more applications ready for the admissions process. If any potential students in your area are interested, please have them download an application from the Web site or write to us for an application. Now is a good time to apply.

Gary Antion

### **Editorial**

We completed the May-June issue of *The Good News* and sent it to the printer earlier this week. The cover theme for this issue is "Do Good People Really Go to Heaven When They Die?" The total print run for this issue is 458,774.

With this issue we are switching to a different R.R. Donnelley plant. For the last few years we have printed at their plant in Pontiac, Illinois. This will be our first issue printed at Glasgow, Kentucky. If the name sounds familiar, that's where *The Plain Truth* was printed in the 1980s in its heyday. The reason for this change is that we have basically outgrown the Pontiac plant. The Glasgow plant is better suited to our longer print runs.

We have various other publications being printed or reprinted right now, including 30,000 copies of the *Making Life Work* booklet, 10,000 each of lessons 6, 7 and 8 of the *Bible Study Course*, and 180,000 copies of *The Good News* special issue to send to new subscribers and as gift copies.

Scott Ashley

### **E-mail Update Utilities Show Significant Growth**

It is encouraging to see significant growth in new people signing up to receive our weekly UCG Web site updates and UCG member updates. We currently have 4,521 subscribers to our Web site updates, a 33 percent increase over the past six months. This service lets our users know about the latest new items on our site. Approximately 135 new people are now signing up each week!

In addition, there are 1,424 people signed up to receive UCG member updates, which give our users updates of Church news and other important developments. Approximately 76 new people are now signing up each week! You can sign up for either service today by simply going to our Web site at [www.ucg.org/](http://www.ucg.org/) or visiting our updates page at <http://www.ucg.org/contact/updates.htm>.

Michelle de Campos

### **Holy Day Offering: Preliminary Reported Figures for First Day of Unleavened Bread**

#### **2003 Offering Information (reported)**

Attendance:	13,287
Offering:	\$685,628.14*

#### **2002 Offering Information (reported)**

Attendance:	12,911
Offering:	\$653,150.60

This represents a 3.0 percent **increase** in attendance over 2002, and a 4.6 percent **increase** in the offering amount over 2002.

\* Once all individually mailed offerings are processed, this figure may reach \$700,000.

Gerald Seelig

### **Personal Correspondence**

I'm happy to report a busy month of March for PCD activity. We wrote 113 letters and answered 85 E-mails. A lady new to the Church of God asked for advice on how she could keep the Days of Unleavened Bread, when her husband is not a believer. A person who is finding all Christianity hollow wants to know how to find the true Church. A discouraged individual wants to know why he still finds he has to battle sins for which he asked forgiveness long ago.

One request for advice gives us a glimpse into what people in Kenya have to contend with. A subscriber wrote that her tribal religion believes that the dead regularly communicate with the living, telling them to do all kinds of absurd things. She asked if it is possible for the dead to talk to the living.

A subscriber battling homosexuality asked our advice on how to overcome the problem. A person whose marriage broke up years ago wants to know if building a relationship with God will automatically restore his relationship with his ex-wife and family. A woman convicted that she should keep the Sabbaths and Holy Days wondered if God would condemn her for failing to obey, if her boss won't give her the time off.

A high school student doing a research project on us asked many questions about the United Church of God. After reading *Sunset to Sunset—God's Sabbath Rest*, a person asked if we really keep the Sabbath; having sincerely believed he was a good Christian, he was literally thunderstruck by the truth of the Sabbath. A person who subscribed to the *GN* in 1984/85 asks if we have any connection with the WCG of that day.

In conjunction with the war in Iraq, a subscriber asked if it is the country of the devil. A lady asked us to pray for God to straighten her husband out. A man asked if women have souls (he offered no explanation for his question!). A prisoner asked if we will train him to be a chaplain. A man attending a Protestant church that he feels is not treating him right asked if we would write to the church to get it to treat him better.

Cecil Maranville

### **Radio Stations Airing the Good News Radio Program**

Radio stations currently airing the *Good News* radio program have been carefully selected and tested. "News/talk" formatted stations such as WREC-AM 600 in Memphis, Tennessee, WIBC-AM 1070 in Indianapolis, Indiana, and WBEN-AM 930 in Buffalo, New York, have consistently produced excellent responses. We regularly seek other stations that will generate similar results.

With this in mind, we recently added 5,000-watt, 80-year-old news/talk station WSYR-AM 570 in Syracuse, New York. Syracuse is the 75th ranked U.S. media market out of 276. WSYR-AM features talk show hosts Rush Limbaugh, Dr. Laura Schlesinger, Sam Donaldson and others in its daily line-up. Our broadcast airs every Saturday evening at 10 p.m. On a ranking of Syracuse-area AM and FM stations, WSYR-AM is number one out of 19 during this airtime. WSYR-AM has a broadcast radius of up to 75 miles and reaches across Lake Ontario into the province of Ontario in Canada.

We also recently added 43-year-old talk station KFMB-AM 760 in San Diego, California. San Diego is the 15th ranked media market and has a metropolitan area population over 2,800,000. With a 5,000-watt signal, KFMB-AM has a large broadcast radius including a nighttime interference-free zone that covers the entire San Diego metropolitan area. Our program airs at 6 a.m. each Sunday morning. At this airtime, KFMB-AM radio is ranked third out of 27 San Diego area AM and FM stations. We expect to move to a slightly later airtime within a few weeks.

Our program also just began airing on 50,000-watt news/talk station KXEL-AM 1540 in Waterloo, Iowa, at 10:15 p.m. Saturday nights. After dusk, its powerful signal can reach into several Midwestern states and into Mexico and at least four Canadian provinces. We are in line to shift to an earlier airtime when it becomes available.

Finally, we recently added 50,000-watt WWVA-AM 1170 in Wheeling, West Virginia. The station calls itself "The Big One" since its signal can reach into 18 states and six Canadian provinces after dusk. Our program is

now airing on Monday mornings at 12:30 a.m. At this airtime we are obviously reaching a number of “night owls!” We are pleased with the response from this station. WWVA-AM currently holds the distinction of being our lowest cost station at just under \$10 per response.

*John LaBissoniere/Peter Eddington*

### **The Good News Radio Program on News/Talk Stations**

Our testing has found that “talk” and “news/talk” formatted radio stations have been most effective in reaching a knowledgeable and responsive audience for the *Good News* radio program. Listeners tuning to news/talk stations are generally conservative and are often keenly interested in learning and keeping up with current events—rather than simply being entertained, as is often the case on music-formatted stations.

In a May 15, 2002, press release, Scarborough Research reported that 22 percent of American adults aged 18-plus listen to news/talk radio stations. Based on other research, news/talk stations have the second highest listening audience for people age 35-44 in a comparison with 16 other radio formats. In terms of finding our broadcasting niche, it appears that the news/talk format presents a good opportunity for the *Good News* radio program compared to music formatted stations. In fact, many music stations do not even provide openings for 30-minute “block” airtime. Even when they do, the cost is often higher than for news/talk stations. Over 1,700 talk and news/talk radio stations are currently broadcasting in the United States. This means there are numerous opportunities available for our program in many media markets.

*John LaBissoniere*

### **Web Site: Read “Current World News and Trends” Every Day**

With so much happening so quickly in today’s world, how can you keep up? We’ve recently added two new features to our Web site to help people follow Christ’s instruction in Luke 21:36 to watch world events—and to help make sense of all that’s happening.

Scott Ashley and Tom Robinson review dozens of news sources every day to bring you what’s truly important. Inspired by our *Good News* magazine feature “World News and Trends,” the “Current World News and Trends” Web feature is updated every weekday with links to important news stories from around the world—many that are, at least in a general way, related to Bible prophecy. In the “News Analysis” section of this page we link to interesting commentaries from outside sources about current events and trends. While we don’t necessarily endorse everything in these pieces, we do recommend them as worthwhile and informative reading. The various links are accompanied by a few lines of introductory text to make it easy to skim the stories and to find ones you’re most interested in. We trust this will turn out to be a valuable service.

Please make a point to visit [www.ucg.org/worldnews](http://www.ucg.org/worldnews) to find links to the most important world news and trends from across the globe or scroll down in the right hand column where you’ll see a convenient link to the “Current World News and Trends” section—right above our live news feed.

Also, to get a biblical perspective on major events, visit [www.ucg.org/commentary](http://www.ucg.org/commentary) for a weekly commentary on the trends shaping our world. To expedite viewing of this new material, at the top of our home page you’ll now notice a convenient link to the weekly commentary on current events written by our ministers and editors. This will help our site to remain relevant in the face of major breaking stories.

*Aaron Booth*

### **Youth United E-mail Updates**

Attention teens and young adults! Would you like to be notified via E-mail when a new issue of *Youth United* comes on-line? If so, visit [www.youthmagazine.org](http://www.youthmagazine.org) today and click on the “subscribe” button. We currently have 767 teens and young adults signed up to receive *Youth United* E-mail updates.

*David Treybig*