

## **Home Office Update** **May 22, 2003**

Dear Brethren,

We had the pleasure of attending the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, family activity last weekend and had a wonderful time. More than 300 people attended from several congregations. The theme for the weekend was “Unsinkable Faith.” On the Sabbath we had a young adults Bible study and two Bible studies presented by Arnold Mendez dealing with the Flood and creation. In the middle of the day we had Sabbath services, followed by refreshments. The whole weekend was geared to strengthening the faith of all in attendance—old and young alike. That evening was a dinner and prom for the teenagers and young adults—a type of graduation prom. For those able to stay, there was a picnic on Sunday with live music. Our compliments to Mitch and Linda Knapp and Jim and Judy Servidio and the local congregations for arranging such a fine family event. We also had the opportunity to visit with Steve and Kathé Myers, who also serve congregations in Minnesota.

Here in the United States we have a three-day weekend coming up with Memorial Day on Monday, May 26. This is also a good time for family and friends to get together and take some time off. Norma and I plan to drive to Tennessee to visit her father. I hope all of you are able to take a little time off and enjoy friendships and recreation.

The following week we will have the opportunity to travel to Canada for their national council meetings. Then, after that trip, we will be observing the Pentecost weekend with the Athens and Marietta, Ohio, and Morgantown, West Virginia, congregations served by Bill and Carolyn Winner. We look forward very much to meeting with the ministry and brethren from that region. Since this will be my last correspondence to all of you prior to this Holy Day, I would like to wish all of you an enjoyable and inspiring Pentecost.

Speaking of God’s feasts, even though the summer is just beginning in the northern hemisphere, we are already giving thought to plans for the upcoming Feast of Tabernacles. An announcement about housing is in this update, as well as a report indicating that Festival registration numbers are up. I am sure it will be the first of several announcements that will come out during the next few months.

Also in this report is an interesting update about the *Good News* radio program being aired on the 50,000-watt news/talk station KXEL AM 1540 in Waterloo, Iowa. We hope improved time slots will lead to greater response. Finally, Cecil Maranville shares with us some of the interesting letters he and others answer from our readers and coworkers.

*Roy Holladay*

### **Ambassador Bible Center**

The second semester began with a beehive of activities. Initially there was the introduction of the second semester classes including Major and Minor Prophets, the Book of Acts, and Gospels II. The annual meeting of the General Conference of Elders provided students the opportunity to serve at an ABC table and help distribute charitable items from LifeNets to the international ministers from areas where there are needs. The students had the opportunity to mingle with elders from all over the world and to attend many of the sessions that were open.

A costume dance was held the weekend of May 10 with invitees from surrounding church areas and ABC students. The proceeds will go to helping with charitable projects. The ABC chorale is practicing diligently as they will be performing their Sabbath music in Dayton, Indianapolis, Lexington and the two Cincinnati congregations before the end of this ABC year in August. Cards continue to be prepared and sent to ailing brethren by the students.

Applications continue to trickle in, and we have now accepted nine students with three more awaiting a decision and others awaiting material to complete their application packets.

The students continue to exhibit high energy and are trying to pace themselves for the remaining two and a half months of instruction.

Thank you for your thoughts, prayers and concern for ABC.

*Gary Antion*

### **Feast of Tabernacles: Early Housing Reservations**

The general membership may make Festival housing reservations beginning June 1. Those qualifying for early housing reservations should do so prior to June 1.

The Church allows those with special needs the opportunity to call prior to the general membership. If these members were not given this consideration, they may not be able to find their specific needs for housing at the Feast, which would prevent them from attending the Feast at all.

Here are the guidelines for those who have the privilege to call prior to others.

- (1) Handicapped. This includes those who absolutely must have a first floor room or no steps. However, if all the properties have elevators, then they would not necessarily need to call early.
- (2) Financial. This is to make sure less expensive rooms are available to those who actually need them. If people who can afford more expensive rooms took all the cheaper rooms, some would not be able to attend.
- (3) Families of six or more. This is for families who live together at home, not a sister who lives out of state and another brother who might live in the same town as the parents, but who lives in his own apartment. Groups and families getting together at the Feast should wait till June 1.
- (4) Festival staff. This is for when they specifically need to make early reservations. It is based on need, not as a perk for service. Ministers are not to make early reservations unless it is a need.

Your help and cooperation is greatly appreciated, and helps ensure that all members find suitable housing and that we are able to negotiate good rates for everyone.

*Charles Melear*

### **Feast of Tabernacles: Registration**

U.S. and Canadian Festival registration is slightly higher than last year. This is the fourth consecutive year registration has increased. This is not necessarily a true comparison year to year as international transfers are not tracked and they can fluctuate. Nevertheless, it is an encouraging indicator.

*Charles Melear*

### **Good News Radio Program**

For the past 13 weeks, the *Good News* radio program has aired at 10:15 p.m. every Saturday night on 51-year-old, 50,000-watt news/talk station KXEL AM 1540 in Waterloo, Iowa. Although that airtime didn't generate the number of responses for which we had hoped, our desire was to do what we could to maximize listenership on this station whose signal, after dusk, can reach into 28 states, Mexico and Canada. So, beginning May 27, 2003, our program will move from the Saturday night slot, to every Tuesday and Wednesday night at 9 p.m. Also, 15-second "tags," designed to remind listeners to call our toll free number and tune-in each Tuesday and Wednesday night, will air at the end of each broadcast. Besides that, several 30-second promotional ads, to help generate additional listenership, will air at various times every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Through these marketing upgrades, we hope to significantly improve our effectiveness on this station. If successful, it will help build on the overall effectiveness of our radio broadcasting efforts—which in most markets is consistently obtaining good results. Your regular prayers for improvements in ways and methods to reach willing and responsive listeners through both radio and cable-access television, is very much appreciated.

*John LaBissoniere*

### **Personal Correspondence**

During the month of April, we again had a number of interesting letters. Some of the serious matters we handled included encouraging a young widow who is truly enthusiastic about learning God's truth. A subscriber wanted to know if marriage could survive infidelity. Another wanted advice because her husband abandoned her and her family. Also dealing with marriage, a reader wanted to know how to deal with forgiveness and anger. A deeply repentant person asked if his wild past would prevent conversion; he was asking for an explanation of the unpardonable sin. A subscriber asked our help in finding the right church. A lady in her 80s asked if it's too late for her to be baptized; we assured her it is never too late, so long as one repents and wants to follow God's way of life. And a teacher asked permission to use a *GN* article in teaching his classes; we granted the permission, asking only that he acknowledge the *GN* as his source. All of these questions or comments show the importance of our communication with our subscribers and that God is working through the United Church of God.

Of course, we always receive those other types of questions, some of which make us smile. A lady asked us to pray that God will stir her husband to attend her Protestant church with her. A subscriber asked, *after* reading the Sabbath booklet, if we actually keep the Sabbath (this question comes up every now and again). We assured the person that every member and every congregation of UCG does so. A person not even on our mailing list asked us to provide him with ministerial credentials. Of course, we politely declined.

*Cecil Maranville*