

## Home Office Update October 1, 2003

Dear Brethren,

Since I last wrote to you, Norma and I have had a wonderful trip to Germany and the Netherlands. While we did some touring, the real benefit of the trip was meeting with so many brethren in both countries. We found the members to be extremely warm and hospitable. They made us feel right at home.

We arrived in Germany on Wednesday, September 3. Paul Kieffer (the pastor for Germany and Holland) had scheduled a dinner with several members in Utrecht in the Netherlands on Thursday evening. We rode a train to and from Bonn and Utrecht and had a delightful trip. On Friday we had another dinner with a larger group of members in Germany. Over 70 members gathered in the Düsseldorf area on the Sabbath for a Q&A session, sermon and potluck. Since we have not been given the gift of tongues, I was very appreciative to Paul Kieffer and Jesmina Allaoua for translating! We were able to meet and get acquainted with most of the members there.

On Sunday, we were privileged to attend a meeting of the German National Council. Again, some of the advantages of these visits are to learn as much as we can about how the national councils operate, meet the people, learn of their needs and enhance our understanding of how the home office and Council can better serve all their requirements.

Paul was a perfect host for us while we were in Germany. We had the opportunity to stay with him in his home in Germany and he was a delightful tour guide on our excursions. (His wife, Monica, was in the United States preparing for the wedding of their son.) I was also able to see firsthand the large quantity and high quality of work done by the Church in Germany, especially Paul, Monica and Jesmina. For years now they have had a bi-monthly *Good News* magazine in German, as well as numerous booklets and the *Bible Study Course* in the language. Regular advertisements and a consistent renewal program help them maintain a healthy subscriber base.

We were able to spend a couple of days in Berlin and were vividly reminded of the precious freedom that so many in the Western world take for granted. We toured the Berlin Wall Museum, saw Check Point Charlie and the outline of where the Berlin Wall separated West and East Berlin. It was not that long ago that the East Germans did not enjoy the freedom and liberty that they presently do. This experience was a forceful reminder of the true meaning of the coming Feast of Tabernacles—of the liberty and freedom being extended by Jesus Christ to the nations of this world. The nations today are in slavery to Satan and sin, and many are ruled by cruel despots. The Kingdom of God will change all of that, as we will review at the Feast of Tabernacles.

This will be our final report or letter before the Feast. I hope you will take the opportunity to read about the various programs and projects taking place—especially the printing of our new youth magazine, *Vertical Thought*. I just saw the first issue and I am really impressed. The graphics, layout, photos, personalized articles (which are also shorter in length) and the involvement of young people make this magazine a most inviting read.

*Roy Holladay*

### **Ambassador Bible Center**

We are busily preparing for next year's class at Ambassador Bible Center. There are a few interruptions—feast days and mini-samplers—but these are most welcome distractions.

In September we did two of the four mini-samplers scheduled. Ralph Levy and Matthew Fenchel did a mini-sampler in Cambridge, Ohio, where there were nearly 75 in attendance for some of the sessions and 47 certificates were given for those who attended all of the mini-sampler classes. Donald Ward and I traveled to the Boston, Massachusetts, area to conduct a mini-sampler. There were 125 in attendance as a high, and we gave out 54 certificates to those who attended the full session. So, about 200 brethren were served by this program of bringing ABC to the brethren, and over 100 “graduated.”

We have Jefferson City, Missouri, and Tacoma, Washington, to do over the weekend of November 15 and 16. Roy Holladay and I will be in Tacoma, and Melvin Rhodes and Dr. Levy will be teaching in Missouri. Class subjects will be announced shortly after the Feast, but we encourage all who are interested and live in those parts of the country to set aside that weekend to attend an exciting ABC mini-sampler.

Acceptances for the 2004 school year of the full curriculum of ABC are nicely balanced with 14 males and 16 females. This class looks like it will be a very good one, and we are excited for them to come. There is still time for any who are still interested in applying to send an application for 2004. The deadline is mid-December.

Additionally, we have recently been able to purchase a substantial number of books from the Dean Blackwell collection. Some were also donated by the family. Within this collection are some very valuable church history volumes and Sabbatarian material. This purchase will add greatly to our ABC library here at the home office. Dr. Levy has been instrumental in working with this project.

Gary Antion

### **Editorial**

We're putting the finishing touches on a letter offering the *Bible Study Course* to 126,000 *Good News* subscribers. We try to send a letter every year offering the *Bible Study Course* to our subscribers to encourage them to learn more about the basic teachings and fundamental truths of the Bible. To hold down costs, we're mailing the letter only to those who have been receiving the magazine for more than a year. We expect to get 15,000 to 20,000 requests for the *Bible Study Course* from this mailing.

We're busily working on the November-December issue of *The Good News*, which goes to the printer the week after the Feast. The cover theme of this issue is about marriage. We're also working on updating several booklets for reprinting. These include *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* (its fourth printing), *The Church Jesus Built* (its third printing) and *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest* (its sixth printing).

We appreciate the faithfulness and generosity of United members and supporters that make these efforts possible.

Scott Ashley

### **Feast of Tabernacles Webcast Information**

Several Feast of Tabernacles sites will be webcasting services this year. Those brethren who are unable to attend the Feast may find these Internet broadcasts very helpful. Please point your browser to [www.ucg-fot.org](http://www.ucg-fot.org) for a list of sites, or go to United's Multimedia page at [www.ucg.org/multimedia](http://www.ucg.org/multimedia) for the link. Sites included this year are Bend, Oregon ([cgca.net/ucg-fot/2003/usawest](http://cgca.net/ucg-fot/2003/usawest)), Hagerstown, Maryland ([cgca.net/ucg-fot/2003/usaeast](http://cgca.net/ucg-fot/2003/usaeast)), Italy and two sites in Canada.

Charles Melear

### **Festival Travel: Delta Tickets**

Are you flying Delta Air Lines for the Feast? If so you can help the Church earn free tickets and not affect your personal frequent flyer miles. The process is simple.

Locate your ticket number. It will begin with 006 and then a string of 10 or 11 other numerals. Send that number to [USFestival@ucg.org](mailto:USFestival@ucg.org).

This is a way of saving the Church hundreds of dollars. You still earn your personal frequent flyer miles too. Thanks for your help.

Charles Melear

## **Leadership Workshop 2003**

The Leadership Workshop, organized by the Ministerial Services Team, proved to be highly profitable to the 44 men and women who attended this past August. This is the second year we held such a conference in Cincinnati. The emphasis of the program this year was developing leadership within the local congregations. Apparently, there has been some misunderstanding as to the purpose and focus of this year's program. The purpose was not to handpick and train individuals to become ministers. This was not a pastor preparation training session but further training in leadership so that the attendees could better serve all age groups within their local congregation. The participants had either applied to attend the workshop or had been recommended to do so by their local pastor. All of them were interviewed by a member of the Ministerial Services staff before attending and received approval from their local pastor. We hope to implement this type of program on a regional basis to make it available to more people. I would like to thank Richard Pinelli and the Ministerial Services staff for the high caliber of presentations given at the Leadership Workshop.

Roy Holladay

## **Subscriber Development**

One goal of the Media and Communications Services department is to reach out to our *Good News* magazine subscribers with additional offers and letters as the budget allows. This fiscal year we have budgeted for four "subscriber development letters." The first one was mailed in July and offered 200,000 of our readers the new booklet, *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*. As of the end of September we received a total of 31,700 requests for the booklet—one of our best responses to anything we've offered!

On October 9 we will send out an offer for the *Bible Study Course* to approximately 126,000 U.S. subscribers (see "Editorial" above). We offer the *BSC* about once a year at the fall Holy Day season time period, and this year will be no exception. Those people who subscribe and complete all 12 lessons of the course are some of the most likely readers to be interested in the gospel message and become more involved with the Church. We're looking for a very favorable response to this October offer.

We use several opportunities throughout the year to reach out to our readers, endeavoring to get them more involved in what United is doing. Please pray for the success of this particular subscriber development effort, as well as for the other promotional efforts underway and in this year's plan.

Peter Eddington

## **Vertical Thought in the Mail!**

We're excited to announce that the inaugural issue of our new 24-page teen and young adult magazine, *Vertical Thought*, was mailed on Monday, September 29! Copies were sent to people on our file in the United States who are in the age bracket of 12 to 22. Subscriptions to this age group will automatically continue until the reader reaches age 23.

Bulk shipments were sent to United's national offices outside the United States for distribution to young people in their regions. Therefore, readers outside the United States may not receive their copies until after they return from the Feast of Tabernacles. You can view the premier issue online at [www.verticalthought.org](http://www.verticalthought.org) in both HTML and PDF formats. Please continue to pray that the Church will harness the most effective ways of reaching readers among our younger demographics.

Many thanks go to David Treybig, managing editor of *Vertical Thought*, and the many men, women and young people involved from start to finish in this project. Additionally, Jim O'Brien and the Cincinnati North congregation are contributing to the center eight pages of the magazine—a special section titled "Inside Thought" that focuses more directly on what the young people in United are doing to walk closer with God in their daily lives. "Inside Thought" replaces the publication *Us Teens*, previously produced by the Cincinnati North brethren.

We trust that this new publication will be one more tool in our pouch as we strive to diligently preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all we are able to reach.

*Peter Eddington*

### **Personal Correspondence**

The total number of Personal Correspondence Department letters for August was 125, with another 97 messages handled by the e-mail team. A 52-year-old prisoner tells of his father, and his grandfather before him, listening to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. His reason for contacting us was to ask about enrolling in Ambassador Bible Center by correspondence. (We received two additional inquiries about taking ABC courses by correspondence this month; at the moment this isn't possible.) Two other prisoners wrote about their ongoing struggle to obtain permission to observe the Sabbath and Holy Days. Another prisoner is filing a formal complaint against his chaplain for obstructing his desire to keep God's food laws. Still another prisoner wrote to us about the fears he has about his safety; he wanted to document his fears, in case something happened to him, because the prison officials have been unresponsive to his requests for protection. This man is a prospective member. Four prisoners, all relatively new on file, asked for the local minister's address and/or to have him write to them. We responded by offering PCD's services.

We received a truly unusual and moving letter from a prisoner on death row. Explaining that he was afraid of dying, he asked us to tell him how Christ will treat him in the afterlife. He wrote much like a child and is apparently learning impaired; he said his IQ is 65. Given his comprehension level, he is not able to understand our booklets on the subject, and we had to put the information in simple words for him.

Three people wrote us about homosexuality; one in response to the Anglican Church matters and two others on how to overcome. Nine separate individuals sought our advice on how to convert their friends and family members. One was a follow-up from last month. After receiving a letter that explains that the Bible teaches us not to try to convert others, this person wrote back with her appreciation and said, "Then, I will just tell everyone I meet about God." We wrote again, attempting to be clearer!

In the truly unusual category, a person asked for our assistance in blocking a proposed freeway interchange in the area. Another wrote about how scientific the Bible is, "because it teaches that the earth is flat and that the sun revolves around the earth."

By the way, we occasionally receive criticisms from members about the information in these PCD Activity Reports. Some have expressed concern that we are making light of people's sincere requests or that we're betraying confidences. We would like to assure all that we treat every person who writes to us with respect and courtesy. At the same time, we would like to be able to provide the ministry and the membership with a brief snapshot of the letter activity, for it is inspiring, and at times, inherently humorous. The humor is innocent, typically an unusual request or comment, never sarcasm or poking fun at someone. And, we never disclose the identity of the people who write the letters that we report about in these monthly summaries. The letters we report about are typically from subscribers, not from the people attending our congregations.

*Cecil Maranville*