

# United Church of God *an International Association*

Clyde Kilough  
Chairman

Roy Holladay  
President

## Letter from the President October 31, 2003

Dear Brethren,

What a wonderful fall Holy Day season we have just experienced! Norma and I just returned from observing the Feast of Tabernacles in Grange-over-Sands in England. This quaint village is located in the Lake District of England, which has to be one of the most beautiful spots in the world. We found the brethren in the U.K. to be delightful, warm and very appreciative of being able to meet with God. God is the host of these days, and His presence was very much evident in all phases of the meetings we attended. Peter Hawkins, the ministry and many volunteers are to be commended for organizing and running a very rewarding Feast.

I am sure all of the above could be said for every Feast site. The few reports I have received so far are inspiring indeed. I look forward to hearing more from the various Festival coordinators and brethren during the coming weeks. A full report on the Feast worldwide will appear in the next *United News*. Be sure to read all the blessings that God poured out on His people around the globe.

God continues to provide His Church with growth and stability, and this was evident during these fall festivals. Around the world the total reported attendance was 19,761 at more than 50 United Church of God sites. Below are the preliminary attendance and offering figures for the United States. Thank you for your generosity and faithfulness.

Feast of Trumpets: Attendance – 12,718 (4.1% increase). Offering – \$644,695 (0.2% increase).

Day of Atonement: Attendance – 12,397 (0% increase). Offering – \$627,451 (0.8% increase).

1<sup>st</sup> Day of Tabernacles: Attendance – 11,489 (0.6% increase). Offering – \$536,986 (4.3% increase).

Last Great Day: Attendance – 11,205 (5.4% increase). Offering -- \$638,053 (5.4% increase).

What a blessing the plan of God is, and what a blessing He has given us in the Holy Days! Every year, throughout the year, we are reminded of a key aspect in the vision God has for all of humanity—forgiveness, overcoming, the role of Jesus Christ, our future as sons of God, etc. We have the opportunity to think and study about each step of that plan—and what it means for us and all people. We have the chance—using the “microscope” of God’s Word—to discuss and hear details of what God has done and is doing. God has given us these feasts so that we do not forget Him and what He offers to us.

Can you imagine *not* having the annual festivals? I can’t. The inspiration, encouragement and instruction we receive from sermons, Bible studies, activities, family time and fellowship during the Holy Days simply cannot be duplicated in any other way. Not to be forgotten is the joy we experience because we know God loves us and is systematically working out a plan. Despite the trials, difficulties and temptations we have in our daily lives, we receive strength and motivation from God during these special times of year. Let us be sure to remember and renew this spiritual strength throughout the year, so we do not lose hope or vision.

During the Feasts we are also reminded of the goals that God has given us. We have work to do! As the Body of Christ, we must be about our Father’s business. This world needs the message of the Kingdom of God. It is the only hope for the human condition (our sinful nature) and for the downward spiral of society under the influence of Satan. We need to pray that God would direct us and empower us to do more to preach the gospel.

We also must be about the business of preparing the Bride of Christ and the children of God for the return of Jesus Christ. During the 1,000 years of Christ’s rule on earth, we will have much more to do than we do now! We need to be fine tools in His hands.

The Holy Days also help us to remain humble and grateful. Where would we be without God, His calling, His love for us individually, His truth and His Holy Spirit—need I say more? Let us remember to articulate our thanks to God in daily prayer. Let us thank Him for His plan of salvation and the encouragement and motivation we receive through the Holy Days. Without this purpose for all humanity, we would all simply perish.

I would like to express my gratitude for the work that went into the organization of the Feast sites, for the benefit of all. I want to acknowledge the year-round work that Charles Melear and the various Festival coordinators do, so that we can have a truly joyous eight days together. There are literally hundreds of details that must be thought through, and not a few long days of work. We are the beneficiaries of this tremendous effort. Our sincere thanks go to these individuals.

I would also like to thank Peter Eddington and Clay Thornton for their excellent work on the Feast sermon video. I heard numerous positive comments about this year's production—especially the opportunity to hear and view our Mexican brethren. Hearing personal stories and experiences give us inspiration and provides us with insight about our brothers and sisters in another part of the world. Don't the many stories in the Bible give us instruction and vision? I look forward in the coming years to "getting to know" more brethren from around the world.

A big thank you needs to be extended as well to the many volunteers who served at each Feast site—parking cars, teaching classes, decorating the stage, organizing activities, ushering, providing music, etc. As we read in 1 Corinthians 12, the Body does not function unless everyone works together. Frankly, I enjoy the Feast much more when I have a chance to serve. God provides blessings to those who give. Again, our thanks for your sacrifice.

We, of course, do not want to forget the ministry and the spiritual food they provided to us during these days. I know the elders who are given speaking assignments spend a lot of time, prayer and study on their messages to deliver the best possible sermons or sermonettes of the year. The fruit of their labor and God's inspiration was very much evident again this year.

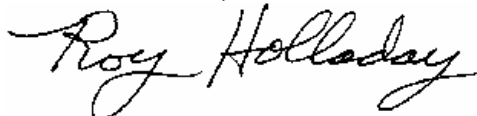
In reality, we are a big team, each given different duties and responsibilities that benefit the whole body—the Church. The Feast of Tabernacles is an additional training opportunity for the Kingdom of God. Not only must we be individually righteous, but we must also be able to work together. It is not enough to simply live under one spiritual roof. We need to be the family of God, according to the will and vision of our Father. Perhaps in some ways that is the most important message we need to take home from the fall festivals.

Before I close, I did want to include an update I received about the horrific fires in Southern California.

"I have checked with our elders, and it would appear that most of the evacuated members have returned to their homes without suffering direct fire damage to their homes. So far the only family to have suffered loss, to our knowledge, is Roland and Diane Clark. Their 5-acre avocado grove burned. But their new home, on the same property, survived without any damage! A few members are still evacuated from the San Bernardino Mountain resort areas, including David and Linda Register. The Registers still do not know the fate of their home. As far as they know, the fire came within a mile of their home and burned 26 homes in their community. Beyond that they do not know any specifics. They may have to wait until the area is open to residents before they find out. This may not happen until next Monday or Tuesday. It may also take three to four weeks to restore power to the mountain areas affected by the fires. The firestorm that ravaged the Cedar Glen area and destroyed over 350 homes is only six miles from the Registers' home."

God again has shown His mercy to our brethren, and your continued prayers in this regard would be most appreciated. Let us collectively pray for God's swift intervention that the fires are quickly put out. Let us also remember the hundreds of thousands of people affected by this disaster.

In Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roy Holladay". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Roy Holladay