

# United Church of God *an International Association*

Clyde Kilough  
Chairman

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President

## Letter from the President December 18, 2003

Dear Brethren,

“Ladies and gentlemen, we got him!” declared coalition administrator L. Paul Bremer to the world this past Sunday. With these dramatic words, millions were informed of the capture of Saddam Hussein. Saddam was a tyrant, a terrorist, a sadist and a murderer. He had bullied, tormented and brutalized his own people for decades. Even though he had been stripped of power by the American forces, his people still feared him. As long as Saddam was free, there was a fear that he could somehow come back and continue his rule of terror.

There are many parallels that can be drawn from this historic event and future prophecies. As long as Satan and his demons are free to roam the earth and influence the world’s population, mankind is in slavery to the arch terrorist. The devil has terrorized mankind for the last 6,000 years. The Scriptures reveal that he has influenced the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical outlook of the human race. Notice some of the descriptors of Satan: He tempts, possesses, deceives, binds, lies, buffets, torments, destroys, slanders, accuses, leads astray, blasphemes, maligns, afflicts, devours, murders, sins and lives in darkness. He is untruthful, proud, corrupt, an adversary, the enemy, filled with violence, etc. As Ephesians 6 reveals, he is the unseen ruler of this world. He has inspired much of the warfare, violence and depravity that we have seen portrayed throughout the history of mankind. He has influenced all of the religions and institutions of this world—He has blinded and deceived all humanity (2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9). Society has been brutalized and terrorized by Satan.

The fall Holy Days give us the sequence of prophetic events that will transpire at the end time. The Feast of Trumpets pictures Christ’s intervention in the affairs of mankind and the first resurrection. Next in sequence is the Day of Atonement, which pictures the time when the devil and his cohorts are thrown into a pit or abyss. Saddam was found hiding in a “spider hole” in the ground. Satan will be locked up in a pit for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3). Mankind will be liberated from the terrorist and his control. Can you imagine that one day Jesus Christ will say to the resurrected saints, “We got him!”—or words to that effect? What “good news”!

As the government of God is extended over the whole earth, one dictator after another will be stripped of his authority and control. Their citizens will no longer have to quake and fear before them. Governments will be taken out of the hands of men and will be given to the family of God. Notice how Christ and the saints will rule: “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me *to preach the gospel to the poor*. He has sent Me *to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives* and recovery of sight to the blind, *to set at liberty those who are oppressed*; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD” (Luke 4:18-19, emphasis mine throughout.). There will come a time when whole nations will rejoice and dance in the streets over the ending of oppression and terrorism.

Such prophecies also show an important “strategy” in God’s planning: Goodness and righteousness cannot be completely successful until evil and sin are removed. When Christ returns, He will come back to earth with the armies of heaven, treading “the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Revelation 19:15). Rebellion and evil must be—and will be—completely defeated before a new world of tomorrow begins.

I believe these events help us to see the need to preach a message of hope to the world—the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Some exciting possibilities are on the horizon for preaching the gospel. Earlier this month, the Council and administration moved forward in some of these areas.

As you probably read from the August and December “Council Meeting Reports,” plans are underway (future budgets permitting) to begin building a video studio here at the home office for the taping of television programs and educational videos. Because of the advancements of technology, the cost of setting up such a

facility has actually come down significantly over the last 10 to 20 years, which makes it a viable opportunity for the Church. During the next couple of years, we plan to allocate funds for these one-time expenses.

The question then arises: “Where will these programs be shown?” One immediate outlet for our video programs is our Internet Web site. You probably have visited Web sites that offer short (or longer) video programs or taped messages. Once programs are produced, we will be able to place them on our Web site where they can be viewed 24 hours per day, seven days a week. We can also offer short, daily commentaries on critical news items, showing how they relate to the Bible. If the convergence of the Internet and television comes, these programs could also be seen on your TV—but at very little cost to the Church.

Of course, we will also probably continue to use cable-access stations, as we have been doing for the past several years with the *Tomorrow* (produced in Portland, Oregon) and *Good News* (produced in Beloit, Wisconsin) television programs. As funds permit, we will also research the use of commercial television. To take advantage of these opportunities, we need additional high-quality programming. Thus the plan to build a studio and gather a team together to make broadcast-quality television programs that will be another tool to preach the gospel to the world.

I hope you were also able to read the news item in the December 2003 *United News* about the new first-contact literature that United is publishing. The Media area is working very hard to improve the instruments we have for preaching the gospel, in order to reach people at their level of understanding (1 Corinthians 9:19-22). Another step that we will be taking in this direction is to sharpen the focus of *The Good News* to be mainly a publication for the general public, to reach people “where they are.” While members will still find *Good News* articles educational and inspiring, the content and style of the articles will be directed primarily to the public.

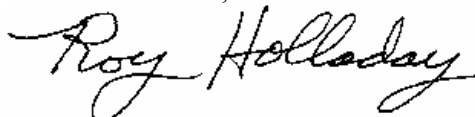
Related to this development is our commitment to use *United News* even more as a publication to further educate and inspire members in their spiritual growth. Doctrinal articles that require a deeper understanding will primarily appear in *United News* rather than *The Good News*. The Media department will be considering how this can best be done. Already, though, there is a wealth of valuable articles to be found in *United News*, and I hope you can find time to read them.

Speaking of education, we also plan to give our educational initiatives a good review and take a fresh look at what resources we have available for “preparing a people”—i.e., how we are providing spiritual food to our brethren. Towards the end of March, we will be hosting a series of meetings at the home office to analyze our efforts in our four areas of education—youth, general, ministerial and focused education. One goal of these meetings is to find a way to better coordinate our efforts, so that we have a systematic approach to providing programs and material for all ages. We want to be more effective and efficient, without unnecessary duplication of effort. We plan to discuss the various tools we are currently using to provide teaching. We want to set goals and develop plans to achieve those. Again, above all, we want to have continuity in our approach.

Of course, I want to emphasize that just because we take periodic reviews of what we are doing, that does not mean the individuals involved in those areas have not done a good job. They have, and I believe God has blessed those efforts. However, we always want to be seeking how we can better fulfill our mission of going to the world with the gospel and preparing a people for God. Pleasing Him is our highest priority.

On a final note, I think you will be particularly interested in the upcoming January-February *Good News*. This is the 50<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Good News*—quite a milestone for our short history. The emphasis of this issue is the four horsemen of Revelation 6. On the cover you will find new artwork that we had specially created for our use—now and for future publications.

In Christ’s service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Holladay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roy Holladay