

Home Office Update **April 8, 2004**

Dear Brethren,

I hope the Spring Festival season has started well for all of you. We have had a most positive beginning here in the Cincinnati area. We had a nice increase in our Passover attendance, with the added joy of several recently baptized individuals participating in their first Passover service. The two Cincinnati congregations then combined on the first Holy Day with 328 in attendance. It was nice to be able to visit with so many brethren that we do not see every Sabbath.

We do not have any information about the Holy Day offerings yet. We would ask for everyone to be praying for God's blessing that the offerings will be strong, so that we can meet our budgeted expenses.

This weekend, my wife and I are looking forward to traveling to the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Chicago, Illinois, areas. On the Sabbath we will be in Milwaukee, and that evening we will join the brethren for their annual dinner-dance. On the seventh day of Unleavened Bread we will go to Chicago to meet with the congregations for the final Holy Day.

With a couple of shorter weeks, our update this time is also a little shorter, yet there are still some interesting reports to mention. We are actively promoting our new booklet, *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*, and there is a report about our efforts in this regard. One of our most effective advertising tools continues to be the Internet. In March we had more than 225,000 visits to our Web site—a new record for United! Increased correspondence spawned by our advertising efforts is also keeping our employees who answer questions (either from the Web site or via postal mail) busy with various inquiries. Cecil Maranville again shares some topics that have recently been addressed.

The Ambassador Bible Center school year is almost half over and Gary Antion provides an update about what is happening with the students. We have had numerous guests into the office during the past several weeks, most of them to teach at ABC, but some came in for meetings or to record new *Good News* radio programs. There is a report about that as well.

Norma and I wish all of you an encouraging and inspiring remainder of the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Roy Holladay

Advertising for New Booklet

Because of increased public interest of late in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and with Passover and Easter on people's minds, a special Web page was developed offering the Church's new booklet, *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*, and a free subscription to *The Good News* magazine. The Web page was created to make it easier for new visitors to locate the new booklet instead of searching for it on the United Church of God Web site. This special Web page address is being advertised through four main sources:

1. A press release was submitted to a global online press release agency, PR Web. This same press release was sent to elders to release in their areas. PR Web is the largest newswire catering to small- and medium-sized companies and organizations, and one of the largest online press release newswires.
2. Newspaper column ads were created for local church areas to use in local papers, and coupons were designed to be cut out and handed to interested individuals. Both ads featured the new booklet and the Web page to visit to request a personal copy. Several congregations have already been running these advertisements in local newspapers.
3. Increased exposure through Overture.com has been initiated, which displays search results in leading Web site search engines.
4. On April 7, the religion editors of 222 U.S. newspapers were mailed the press release, along with two versions of our column advertisements.

In just over a week, 761 requests for the booklet and *The Good News* magazine have been received via this Web page using the advertising methods above. Of these, 570 are from the United States and 191 are from other countries. So far in the month of April, this special Web page is in the top 10 pages viewed on the ucg.org Web site. Not everyone who views the Web page requests the booklet, but they have been introduced to the available literature.

As noted in point two above, the newspaper ads placed by some local congregations have also been effective in advertising this booklet. Here is an opportunity for you to help. If there is interest in placing newspaper ads in your local area, the ads can be found online at www.ucg.org/logo. There is still enough interest in this subject globally for the newspaper ads to be effective for the next several weeks. Although we do not recommend paying regular prices for display advertising, some local community newspapers offer free or very low cost advertising space for churches in their religion section. If you are able to take advantage of free or very low cost advertising space in the religion or movie section of a community newspaper, it could be well worth the effort.

The ucg.org Web site continues to demonstrate itself as a useful tool as more than 225,000 new and returning visitors accessed the Web site for the month of March!

Peter Eddington/Aaron Booth/John LaBissoniere

Ambassador Bible Center

On March 28, several ABC students assisted with handing out water to the thousands involved in a heart-marathon fund-raiser in Cincinnati. This year the students were stationed at the finish line. Their cheerful smiles, along with the refreshing water, were appreciated by the many participants. This was the second year ABC students have participated.

Several students took advantage of an exhibit at the Cincinnati Museum Center, "Peter and the Vatican." While this was clearly a Catholic presentation, the exhibition showed relics and objects from centuries of history. Over half of the class attended this exhibit.

Students also had the opportunity as part of their experience in the Cincinnati area to visit the Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio. Students were able to view the history of flight by seeing dozens of aircraft up close. They also were able to walk through several Air Force One aircraft. Lunch was provided as they enjoyed the free admission to this incredible exhibit. *The Magic of Flight* was shown at the IMAX theater at the museum and featured the Blue Angels flying squadron.

The first semester is nearly complete and the students are on break for Passover and the Holy Days. Several went home to spend this special time with their families. Seven students have been baptized since the beginning of this ABC school year! We offer our gratitude to God for leading them to go His way.

All of the first semester module instructors (Richard Thompson, Melvin Rhodes and Jim Franks) have been here. In addition, Jerold Aust, Ken Graham and Mario Seiglie have been guest lecturers. David Myers is scheduled to come after the break and help complete the first semester's guest instruction by presenting material from the Godly Leadership program.

Our accepted students for 2005 stand at seven, with a few more applications awaiting a decision. It is not too early to apply for next year.

Our ABC Mini-Samplers are set for the fall with Lansing, Michigan; Sacramento, California; the Charlotte area, North Carolina; and Toronto, Canada, having been chosen for this year. A Mini-Sampler is scheduled for Germany during the Feast of Tabernacles as well.

Gary Antion

Good News Radio Program

On March 31 and April 1, Gary Petty recorded nine new radio programs for use during our next 13-week contract period, which begins May 8. Jerold Aust was in Cincinnati to record four of the programs in the studio with Mr. Petty, and long-time elder and Cincinnati resident Ed Smith was here to record two programs with Mr. Petty. In addition, discussions took place via telephone with Howard Davis, Randy Stiver and Gary Black. Here is a listing of what was covered:

1. America's Culture War—with Darris McNeely (recorded from a previous GNTV program).
2. Role of Religion—with Darris McNeely (recorded from a previous GNTV program).
3. Radical Liberalism—with Randy Stiver.
4. What's Wrong With the Bible—with Ed Smith.
5. Did God Create People Evil?—with Ed Smith.
6. Myth and Truth of Armageddon—with Jerold Aust.
7. God Versus Satan—with Jerold Aust.
8. The Mark of the Beast—with Jerold Aust.
9. The Passion's Missing Dimension—with Jerold Aust.
10. The Hope of the Dead—with Gary Black.
11. A Rabbi Named Jesus—with Howard Davis.

Thank you to all those who participated, and may this next round of airings prove to be fruitful in preaching the truth of God and the good news of His soon-coming Kingdom!

Peter Eddington

Personal Correspondence

March was another record-breaker for PCD, with 143 letters! (In addition, the e-mail team answered another 116 messages.) Several letters dealt with serious issues about which people sought counsel: overcoming homosexual temptations (2); dealing with alcohol and other addictions in family members (2); and sexuality in marriage (2).

Several others had questions on baptism and/or becoming members of UCG (8). One deeply convicted person asked if it's possible that God could forgive the sins of 60 years. A lady in her 86th year is just learning the truth and is very excited about keeping the spring Holy Days. Three more asked if we keep the Sabbath. One of those letters is from a couple who have been keeping the Sabbath on their own; they find themselves agreeing with everything that they read from us, so they wrote to check about the Sabbath too. Another who was deeply moved by reading our material about the prophesied trials at the end of the age asked if any Christians will survive the coming persecution.

Consistently we receive questions from people in contact with other Church of God organizations, wanting us to comment on what others say about us. One wanted to know why there are different organizations. Another wanted to know if we agree with the leader of one of the other organizations who says that he is the prophet of John 1:19-21.

A new subscriber asked if we are affiliated with the organization of years ago that published *The Plain Truth*. Another new subscriber asked if we are associated "with the elderly George Armstrong who was on *The World Tomorrow* Television Program."

It's easy to be confused. Thinking in terms of another religion, someone asked us to have "everyone in your convent" pray about her health. Another asked if we thought that everyone who wanted to should be able to participate in the Communion service. But, it's difficult to explain the confusion of one subscriber who asked us to tell him what his previous address was.

We had several questions about *The Passion of the Christ*, ranging from whether a Christian should see it, to how one can obtain a copy in VHS format.

Three of our subscribers reacted unusually to *The Good News* article on *The Da Vinci Code*. One canceled, telling us we should be ashamed to expose children to this kind of information. Another criticized us for not explaining that Jesus Christ was married to Israel. The other asked us how to obtain a copy of the book.

And, subscribers showed a strong interest in the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse series. One wanted to know if we intend to publish this as a booklet (we do not—at least, not in the near future). Others asked if they can obtain a copy of the artwork (we aren't able to fill requests of this type).

Cecil Maranville

United Youth Camps: Teton Challenger Camp Announcement

This announcement concerns anyone who has planned to apply to the Teton Challenger Camp as a camper or staff member this summer.

The Teton camp has run for eight consecutive sessions, but this summer it will be taking a one-session break, and will resume operation the summer of 2005. This is a very time-intensive and logistics-intensive camp for staff to operate, and many factors must all come together in order to be truly effective. Several factors have combined to preclude the continuing of plans for this year's camp. We hope that by making the decision now rather than nearer the time of camp, it will give everyone affected sufficient time to make other plans for this summer.

In terms of numbers, the 60 older teens and young adults who would have attended the Challenger Camp can be accommodated by the other United Youth Camps. In fact, some of the older campers may even be eligible to serve as staff at one of our other camps where staff members are needed.

In terms of opportunity, this year we were already planning to raise the Challenger Camp age requirements by one year. This means anyone who was too young for this year as a result of the older age requirement will be eligible next year, and for several years to come, through age 20. And for those already on the older end of the scale, well, most have already had some experience at the Teton camp.

For anyone who has already sent an application in to the Teton Challenger Camp, your application attachments will be returned to you this coming week. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Larry Greider