

United Church of God *an International Association*

Clyde Kilough
Chairman

Roy Holladay
President

Home Office Update May 5, 2005

Dear Brethren,

We hope your Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread were as meaningful and enjoyable as ours were. Norma and I had the opportunity to travel to Fort Myers, Florida, for the Passover, Night to Be Much Observed and first Holy Day. We were pastoring Fort Myers when United began; consequently, we have a special bond with the members there. They are deeply committed to the work of the Church. For the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, we had the wonderful opportunity to go to Chicago, Illinois, and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first congregation in that city. The Chicago brethren did an outstanding job of hosting a weekend of fellowship and worship, and they capped it off with a dinner dance. We saw old acquaintances that we had not seen in decades.

Speaking of the Holy Days, we do appreciate God's blessings through the generosity of our brethren with regards to the offerings. The total from the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread showed again a nice increase over last year. (We are still awaiting complete information for the 7th Day of Unleavened Bread.) We certainly do appreciate that difficult economic times and rising prices make finances a challenge for any family. Thank you for your willingness to sacrifice in this way. A report is included in this update.

May is a busy month for the Church, and certainly for families with children in school as well. There are certainly many mixed emotions when children graduate from high school and move on to college, other schooling or jobs. We do want to honor these graduates by featuring them in the July *United News*. Please notice the announcement below.

Also this month, the home office staff is looking forward to once again welcoming the elders who will be coming here for the annual meeting of the General Conference of Elders. The Council of Elders will also be holding meetings before and after the GCE annual meeting and selecting a new president. For all of these deliberations, I would like to ask the brethren to pray that God's will be done, and that we would follow His direction. We must look to the Head of the Body, Jesus Christ—just as we were reminded to do during the recent observance of the spring festivals.

Last but not least, we are moving forward with construction of the new media center. Peter Eddington provides a thorough update on page 3.

Roy Holladay

ANNOUNCEMENT: Attention Graduating Seniors and Parents

Pastors and elders: Could you please pass this on to the families of 2005 high school graduates? Thanks!

Congratulations! We would like to feature the 2005 high school graduates in a special section of the July *United News*. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions and send a photograph by June 13, 2005.

1. Graduate's Name:
2. Parents' Names:
3. Congregation:
4. High School Accomplishments:
5. Church Activities/Hobbies/Interests (tell a little bit about yourself):

6. Plans After Graduation:
7. Additional Comments (favorite quote, favorite scripture, motto, advice, etc. Please identify which it is, so we don't think your advice is your motto, etc.):

Phone number or e-mail address to confirm spellings, etc. (Will Not Be Printed)

Please send with a recent photo of the graduate by June 13.

- By e-mail to: mike_bennett@ucg.org
- By mail to: *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027

We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length; 300-word maximum length. Thanks!

Mike Bennett

Holy Day Offering: Preliminary Reported Figures for First Day of Unleavened Bread

2005 Offering Information (reported)

Attendance:	13,092
Offering:	\$743,162.46

2004 Offering Information (reported)

Attendance:	13,270
Offering:	\$713,114.38

This represents a 1.3 percent **decrease** in attendance over 2004, and a 4.2 percent **increase** in the offering amount over 2004.

* Once all individually mailed offerings are processed, this figure may reach \$755,000.

Gerald Seelig

Media Center Construction to Begin; Contractor Chosen

Progress is continuing toward construction of the Church's new media center at the home office. A contractor was finalized for the work to enclose the studio space the week of April 25. Three bids were submitted for the project and the construction company of Kramer and Feldman Incorporated (KFI) was chosen.

KFI will be responsible for enclosing the open space on the second floor directly above the mailing center. This will be the location of the new media center. A video-recording studio, plus three small offices for future general office needs and expansion, will be enclosed into the 42-foot by 32-foot area. KFI will install walls containing soundproofing materials, install doors and frames, spray acoustic insulation on the ceiling, paint as required, and oversee installation of electrical wiring and additional transformers for studio lighting needs and air conditioning. The three offices will be carpeted and be similar in appearance to existing rooms at the home office.

We anticipate construction beginning around the first week of June after local county permits are approved and secured. This portion of the project will then take about eight weeks to complete. After that point, the procurement of the actual studio equipment, lighting gear, cameras, editing equipment and the on-camera set can begin in earnest.

This author spent three days at the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) convention and trade show in Las Vegas, Nevada, April 19 through 22 to evaluate the latest technology in this regard. It is encouraging to see the cost of video production to be a fraction of what it once was, and the plan is to outfit the Church's studio with digital equipment wherever possible, plus be upgradeable to high-definition video to keep pace with the industry.

The prayers and support of the brethren have been very much appreciated as the media center dream begins to become a reality. This video-recording area will be invaluable to United. Plans are underway to begin actual program content recording sometime in September of this year.

Peter Eddington

New Hire Announced

Carole Gholson began work April 25 as the newest employee in the International English area of Mail Processing at the home office. Carole has been hired to help with the ever-increasing workload that has swamped the two original employees in this section. Responses to the Church's Web site and the related increase in postal correspondence have shown steady growth during the past couple of years.

Carole lives in Florence, Kentucky, and attends the Cincinnati East congregation with her husband, Lloyd.

Alec Surratt

Radio Program Airs on Internet Radio Free

The *Good News* radio program has begun airing on an Internet radio station associated with www.live365.com called "Baby Boomer Music." They have agreed to air our program twice every Sunday at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. PDT.

The URL for the station is www.live365.com/stations/user8262?play. They will provide us with promotional advertising during the week to announce the program, and also to invite users to visit our Web sites. The cost is free for everything. We will air right after Billy Graham's *Hour of Decision*.

Peter Eddington

Personal Correspondence

Fifty-one surface mail letters and 109 e-mail letters were answered in April. The surface mail total is down considerably in comparison with both April and March (when the Passover fell) last year. However, our principal mail reader was out of the office for over a week, which reduced the PCD mail processed.

We had more unusual than typical questions this time. An inmate wrote that a Church of God group that claims it believes the same as we do baptized him. He wants to know if we would accept his baptism as valid. Someone else asked us to convince him why he should join us instead of some other Church of God group. Another wrote that he has a goal of bringing all the Church of God groups into a single organization.

A young man wrote that after reading one issue of *The Good News*, his passion to unite all Christians has been reawakened. He says Christians need to mount "a revolution" to take back the government from corrupt politicians. We told him that we don't advocate political activism, but that the Bible calls on each of us to mount a revolution of one—to conquer the self in preparation for leadership positions that Christ will give to the saints.

A Protestant minister asked our permission to make copies of the *Bible Study Course* lessons to use in his church's Bible classes.

A reader asked if he could expect God to call him through visions or dreams. He seems like a person with genuine interest who wants to know with certainty if God is calling him. What makes his letter unusual is that it comes from Hong Kong.

Someone asked for a tract that outlines "talking points" on how to convert Catholics. Apparently, this type of publication is common in evangelical churches, for people have asked us for others about specific religious faiths.

We had a different question about Christ having brothers and sisters: if He did, why did He ask John to look after His mother? And a reader asked if our teaching is that Christmas really is on Sept. 25 instead of

on Dec. 25. A lady who received *The Church Jesus Built* and lent it to a friend said that her friend brought it back with the comment that we were obviously talking about the Roman Catholic Church. She wanted to know if her friend's assessment is correct.

A subscriber belongs to a church that doesn't believe in eating pork, but does go along with eating other meats that are listed as unclean in the Bible. She thinks her church is wrong and asks us to confirm her conviction that a Christian should keep all the food laws.

An inmate says lots of people ask him Bible questions, and he wants to know if we think that this proves God has given him the spiritual gift of "ministering," by which he apparently means being an elder. On another inmate issue, we dealt with the director of all chaplains for the state of Arizona prisons on a problem that we've been helping an inmate resolve. It seems the inmate's chaplain plainly doesn't like us and he refused to cooperate with a request for a kosher diet. But the chaplain's boss *does* like us—has known about the Church of God for 15 years—and quickly overruled the chaplain!

A lady read our booklet on Revelation and wrote to thank us. She added that God gives her revelations. She offered to help us in any way that we thought we needed her assistance. And, she asked if she should tell the world what God is telling her.

Someone wanting to know about UCG asked if our services are "free and lively" with lots of speaking in tongues, such as she does. Another asked if we are "the official offspring of the WCG."

There were many good Bible and Christian living questions, too!

Cecil Maranville