

United Church of God *an International Association*

Robert Dick
Chairman

Clyde Kilough
President

Home Office Update June 8, 2006

Dear Friends,

I hope you had an inspiring Feast of Pentecost—what a great feast it is, what a powerful reminder of the love of God for His Church and the power of His Spirit working in us! God is accomplishing so much in the lives of our brethren around the world, and I know He is going to bless us more and more as we work hard to increase our effectiveness in preaching the gospel.

Between the Passover and Pentecost we have been extremely busy here at the home office, and the summer schedule is always hectic with camps and other projects going on. All the activity makes for a lot of news, so I wanted to take some extra space here to bring you up to date on several areas of interest.

Dee and I have had a spate of trips recently, and we've been extremely encouraged spending time with so many of you in various locales. Over the Memorial Day holiday (May 27 to 29) we attended the second Kansas City Adults Weekend, which attracted around 80 attendees from across the United States for a variety of seminars and social activities. Then, on the Pentecost weekend, we paid a quick visit to the congregations in Hamilton and Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Attendance was quite high at all locations, especially in Hamilton and Toronto, where a number of visitors came for the Sabbath and Holy Day services.

This coming Sunday, June 11, we head to Calgary, Alberta, to join in several key meetings for the Canadian work. Their Media Committee, Ministerial Services Team and National Council have packed four days with a full agenda on a variety of topics. On Friday Dee and I travel north to Edmonton, to spend the Sabbath with the members in the congregation of our very first assignment as a ministerial trainee in 1974. It will be 30 years, nearly to the week, since we left Edmonton and, having never had the opportunity to return, we really look forward to this special occasion.

In case you're not aware, in the last few weeks' home office Compass Checks we've heard some most interesting reports based on recent travels by several home office staff. Jim Franks reported on his trip to Nigeria, Dave Register on the congregations in Jamaica and Joel Meeker on the members and an extraordinary Good Works project in Rwanda. Don't miss these Compass Checks on the UCG Web site! I guarantee that you will come away inspired, encouraged and deeply moved by the stories and unique circumstances of our brethren in various parts of the world.

I also urge every congregation to pursue placing the *Beyond Today* program on every cable-access station possible in your areas, if you haven't already done so. We are currently on more than 160 stations, but many areas are not yet covered at all. Remember, this is a virtually free way to preach the gospel—all we have to do is make the arrangements! It's easy, and we'll gladly give you all the assistance you need, but it takes initiative on the local level to get the program placed. A few congregations have done really remarkable work. For example, the Oakland/San Jose/Stockton, California, circuit, pastored by Jim Tuck, has placed *Beyond Today* on 32 area stations, and the Chicago, Illinois, area, pastored by Bob Fahey, has it airing on 26 stations!

The seed is being prepared on a steady basis, but we need more of that kind of help in scattering it! Just yesterday, Jim Franks and I had our first taste of being in front of the cameras as Steve Myers' guests shooting two new programs on the subjects of the Sabbath and hell. Tapings continue today with Rex Sexton and Darris McNeely covering God's laws of finances and prophecies concerning the future of America. The world desperately needs this truth of God, so help us put it out there.

At the General Conference of Elders in May I mentioned that we will give a strong administrative focus in the coming year to media development, aiming to make our efforts to preach the gospel more powerful, effective and cost-efficient. To that end, I have put together a media steering group, comprised of several men who have some degree of experience in various media facets, a keen historical perspective of the Church's work, a broad worldview, a blend of analytical and creative skills, an ability to feed a synergistic environment and a passion for this task. In addition to Peter Eddington and me, that team consists of Roger Foster, Bob Dick, Victor Kubik, Joel Meeker and Larry Salyer. Last week we held our inaugural meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, and we will be consulting regularly via teleconference and face-to-face meetings for the foreseeable future. Media encompasses a huge arena, and the nature of technology makes it a dynamic, fast-changing world. We are committed to using the best means possible, in the best manner possible, to fulfill the commission God has given us, and this group's efforts will be a key factor in helping us reach that goal.

This section has been longer than usual, but I hope you haven't been bored! God is richly blessing us, and as we continue "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3), He will walk with us. God is accomplishing so much in the lives of our brethren around the world, and I know He is going to bless us more and more as we work hard to increase our effectiveness in preaching the gospel.

Until next time, may "the God of peace be with you all" (Romans 15:33).

Clyde Kilough

MINISTERIAL SERVICES

Sharron and I had a wonderful Feast of Pentecost visiting with Richard Thompson and the Orlando, Florida, congregation. We had an unusually high attendance on both the Sabbath and the Feast of Pentecost and a very good offering. As this fiscal year comes to an end, we are working diligently on plans for the summer and the fall. Most of the ministerial Festival assignments have been completed, and we have an adequate number of ministers in all the Festival sites that we have responsibility for. We still need some help in two areas in Canada and some other international sites where we have been asked for assistance. Ministerial Services handles all U.S. sites and we help out where requested in international areas. We are pleased that we can provide assistance in most cases. In regards to planning, this year has been good for the U.S. sites, but we have struggled a bit to provide adequate help for the international areas.

Earlier this year we began our regional workshops to discuss our need for help in the full-time ministry. So far, two workshops have been held in the United States—one in Denver, Colorado, and one in Houston, Texas. These have proven to be very effective in identifying our needs for the future and providing a strategy for addressing those needs. We have two more workshops scheduled for June, and then the remaining five are set for the fall and winter. These workshops are being conducted by Richard Pinelli in his new responsibility of Ministerial Development. In addition to the U.S. workshops, Mr. Pinelli has been involved with two workshops in Canada and has two more international sites to attend this summer in the Philippines (July) and Great Britain (August).

Jim Franks

Ambassador Bible Center Update

Since Dave Register is at the Challenger II camp program in Arkansas, he asked if I would write something for the ABC update this time. We are very pleased with the Class of 2006. They are a very attentive class and their desire to serve has been a joy to see.

We have currently accepted 30 for 2007 and have 12 more applications awaiting the trip through the Admissions Committee. So, already, we have the potential for over 40 students in 2007! Please encourage any who are interested to send in their applications as we may have to turn some away if the number soars too high!

Wishing you a joyous Sabbath, and thank you for your prayerful support for the ABC program.

Gary Antion

Personal Correspondence

PCD finished May with 86 letters, and the Internet team answered another 103. We received a larger than usual number of prayer requests for a wide variety of reasons, principally around health issues, whether for loved ones or for themselves. Marriage problems were also a major topic of this month's letters, with people describing relationships in crisis or problems already beyond resolution. Several asked about the Bible teaching on divorce and remarriage. A few were facing the need to take the legal initiative, because their spouses weren't, in spite of the fact that they "departed" the marriage by their actions.

We sent several letters of condolence. One was particularly difficult, for the deceased was a murder victim. Our subscriber wanted to know why God allowed it to happen and, beyond that, why God allowed any innocent people to become victims of crime. Similarly, a reader asked why God did not prohibit people who commit sexual sin from having the blessing of children. It seemed truly unfair to our reader that godly people wanting children were unable to have them, when people who didn't want children at all were having them easily. The solution that both proposed was a world in which God controlled everyone—every decision and the consequence of every action.

Yet another letter on that same theme came from a subscriber living a life of chronic pain and disability; he is looking for encouragement, wondering why God allows these difficulties to happen. Obviously, it is very difficult for people who are hurting to step back and see that having God control every aspect of our life is not the solution. I do not think the person who wrote about children thought through the change it would make in the world if God made it impossible for people who committed sexual sin to become pregnant. It would hardly discourage people from sinning. We explained that controlling everyone would not enable him or her to develop character or to choose freely to obey God, based upon a loving relationship with Him, which is His purpose.

We had a request from a reader for "a list of the sayings of Christ," which the reader wanted to insert in personal correspondence to friends and family members. He probably confused us with an organization that offers this type of material. Someone volunteered to become a UCG missionary and asked how to begin training for the position.

A woman soon to be engaged to a pastor asked if we publish any guidelines for pastors' wives. Another individual wrote that his pastor was caught in sin, and the writer wanted to know how his church should discipline the minister. A devoted Catholic wrote that he decided to join the priesthood, and he asked for any words of advice that we care to offer. Along the same lines, a Sunday pastor asked for advice on what he can say to his congregants to get them to attend every Sunday. Lastly, a subscriber argued that if God truly did not want humankind to eat swine, He should have drowned them in the Flood, thereby removing any temptation to eat them!

Cecil Maranville

Vertical Thought Personal Correspondence

The number of letters to *Vertical Thought* was lower this month, with a total of only 31 received. The April-June issue of *Vertical Thought* with the cover story "How Movies Move Us" generated several questions from young people who have begun to see how they are affected by what they choose to watch, and now want advice on making changes and in some cases removing harmful images and scenes from their minds. We also received a letter from a young man who has grown up as a Hindu and is now struggling to understand Christianity. He asked for our help. Another reader noted all the problems and tragedies that are occurring around the world, and he asked, "What is happening to us?" It is the perfect question to answer with the primary message of the Church of

God—the good news of the Kingdom of God! As prophesied events continue to unfold, it should be our prayer that more and more people begin asking this same question.

Tom Clark

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Beyond Today Program Recordings

Production continues on the Church's newest electronic media effort—*Beyond Today*. Last week we had a much better than average response to the program titled “Displaying the Ten Commandments.” Up until now, our best subjects for response were on topics about prophecy. However, this one “broke the mold” and offered our *Ten Commandments* booklet, and yet pulled in our best telephone response so far.

This week production continued with Steve Myers recording four new programs on June 7 and 8, with guests Clyde Kilough, Jim Franks, Rex Sexton and Darris McNeely. The subjects covered were as follows:

1. “You Need a Break” [the Sabbath] (Myers/Kilough/Franks)
2. “A Place Called Hell” (Myers/Kilough/Franks)
3. “The Debt Trap” (Myers/Sexton/McNeely)
4. “What Next, America?” (Myers/Sexton/McNeely)

This brings the total number recorded to 28, with 24 of them already edited and ready to air. All aired programs can be viewed online at www.beyondtoday.tv. Please continue to pray that the program will be effective, reach our audience and make a difference in people's lives as we work hard to preach the good news of God's Kingdom.

Peter Eddington

One Billion Now on the Internet

Beyond Today airs on over 160 cable-access stations across the United States each week, and also on the Vision and Christian channels across Canada. However, our greatest coverage comes from our presence on the World Wide Web 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The increasing importance of streaming video on the Internet is becoming apparent, as more and more users gain access to broadband connection speeds. In addition, according to a report by analyst Ben Macklin, “Worldwide Online Access: 2004-2010,” the world reached a milestone late in 2005 as Internet access became available to one billion people worldwide, with approximately 845 million using it regularly!

Broadband access also continues to grow and to account for an ever-larger percentage of total Internet access. “At the end of 2005 there were 195 million broadband households worldwide, up from 142 million in 2004, an increase of 37%,” says Mr. Macklin.

And now new technology, WiMAX, the “fat cousin” to WiFi, providing more bandwidth and a greater range, should emerge in 2006 and 2007 as a genuine alternative broadband solution to existing wireless technologies. In South Korea, Australia and parts of Latin America and Eastern Europe, wireless broadband solutions have already entered the market.

As a Church intent on preaching the gospel of God's Kingdom to the world, we must be prepared for the Internet of the future.

Peter Eddington

Editorial Update

Last week we finished the July-September issue of *Vertical Thought* and sent it to the printer. The *Vertical Thought* print run continues to grow, increasing from 18,000 a year ago to 24,000 for this issue, even though we have never advertised it other than in *The Good News* and on our Web sites. We're pleased to see the continuing growth with no advertising cost.

We're now busily working on the next *Good News*, due at the printer in two weeks. We appreciate the generosity of our members that makes it possible for us to reach people with these wonderful truths.

Scott Ashley

Attention Graduating High School Seniors and Parents: Deadline June 12

Congratulations! As mentioned in the May *Home Office Update* and *United News*, we would like to feature the 2006 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 12, 2006**.

1. Graduate's Name
2. Parents' Names
3. Congregation and Pastor's Name
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.)
8. Phone number or e-mail address to confirm spellings, etc. (*Will Not Be Printed*)

Please send with a recent photo (conforming with biblical standards of dress and hair length) of the graduate by **June 12** by e-mail to mike_bennett@ucg.org or by mail to *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length; 250-word maximum length.

So far information has been received from eight guys and 19 girls. Last year there were 33 guys and 48 girls. Thanks!

Mike Bennett

Attention 2006 College Graduates

Congratulations! We welcome information about college graduations as well for the "Local Church Updates" section of *United News*. If there is enough interest, we would consider doing a special section for college graduates as well. If you are interested in this, please send an e-mail with the subject line "College Graduate Section" to mike_bennett@ucg.org. Thanks!

Mike Bennett