

# United Church of God *an International Association*

Clyde Kilough  
Chairman

Roy O. Holladay  
President

## Letter From the Chairman May 1, 2003

Dear Brethren,

Greetings from Cincinnati, where today we unofficially start the activities of the 2003 Annual Meeting of the General Conference of Elders. There is almost a palpable anticipation in the air for this conference. Projected attendance is higher than ever, and coming right on the heels of an uplifting and inspirational Passover season, the expectation is for deeper spiritual growth. We are reminded so forcefully during the Holy Day season that we are only as effective as our spiritual condition. We cannot rise above, in our outward performance, what we are internally in our spiritual state. At the heart of this year's conference theme, "Maximizing Your Ministry," is the issue of growing in godly character, and so it is for every single member of the Body of Christ.

You will hear a lot of good news reported at this conference in terms of growth and development in areas ranging from membership, to subscribers, to income, to educational programs. What we cannot measure easily, however, is our spiritual growth. God can, though, and He does, continually. The Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread focused our thinking in that direction, but just because they are now past, the lessons and meaning of this feast season must remain in the forefront of our daily meditation, prayer and study. Our following through on the commitments that we made at this Passover and feast season to grow and overcome will be one of the greatest keys to the Church's strength as we look toward Pentecost and throughout the coming year.

Things are certainly busy here! While the official business meeting takes place Sunday afternoon, May 4, we try to take advantage of everyone's presence by holding numerous working sessions before and after. Today all of the international elders and wives are meeting from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the *Good News* TV planning meeting goes even longer! On Friday those involved in editorial and all other areas of media also meet all day, while the Festival Coordinators, Member Appeal Committee and Ministerial Education Task Force "get off easy" with only half-day meetings. Tuesday holds all-day meetings for the U.S. Regional Pastors and the Prophecy Advisory Committee, while the Council of Elders begins its three-day session. Sandwiched in between, of course, is the main reason for being here—Sunday's and Monday's convention for all the elders.

We sincerely appreciate your prayers for God's special blessing and guidance on our efforts during these next few days. What we discuss and determine has far-reaching implications for the work of the Church, the members of His Body and people who are yet to be called. I won't list the agenda items for every meeting, but consider for example what the international ministry will be covering:

- The challenges of ensuring a global perspective in our publications.
- How we can more effectively promote *The Good News* and other means of preaching the gospel in the international areas.
- Forecasting ministerial manpower and developmental needs in the next decade as the church grows, and how to fill those needs.
- Youth education efforts to help train the next generation.
- Assistance for the physical needs of brethren in developing nations.

- Increasing effective interaction and coordination between the Council of Elders, home office administration and the international areas.

All of the other meetings have similarly full agendas, but I think that this agenda alone gives you a flavor of how important these talks are.

On Sunday morning we will hear reports about the work of United in Canada, the Caribbean, Italy, the Far East, Ghana and the United Kingdom. Following will be a first-time event for us—a tribute to the 28 elders and elders' wives who have died since United began in 1995. We plan to have an annual memorial at the conference from now on, which is fitting for those who have faithfully served the United Church of God.

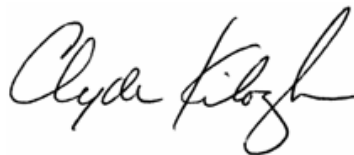
In the afternoon the annual mandated business portion takes place, with the focus of course on the selection of the new Council of Elders members and balloting on proposed amendments and the 2003-04 Strategic Plan, Operations Plan and Budget. Following that we will hear three 20-minute keynote speeches from Paul Luecke, Jim Chapman and Dale Schurter setting the tone for the "Maximizing Your Ministry" theme of this year's conference. Monday is devoted to numerous seminars and workshops that elaborate on various aspects of that theme.

The following three days of Council meetings will cover a variety of topics as usual. Please check the daily updates on the UCG Web site for coverage of both the Annual Meeting of the GCE and the Council meetings.

I truly believe God has helped us immensely to be able to accomplish a remarkable amount of work in light of how thinly spread our manpower resources are around the world. One important factor is this annual opportunity to sit face-to-face and spend hours not only networking and addressing specific work-related issues, but also building camaraderie and the good interpersonal relationships that are essential to our success.

Several thousand of you in many local congregations will join us for Sabbath services via cybercast and phone hookup. It will be nice to share part of our time here with you that way. You are in our thoughts and prayers continually, and thank you again for your continued dedicated support of the work of the Church—you do shine as beacons in a troubled world.

Sincerely, in Christ's service,



Clyde Kilough

PS—The offering tallies for the last Holy Day just came in for the United States, and considering the tight economy and uncertain world scene, they truly reflect the generous spirit and heart of God's people. The reported attendance was 12,181, a 1.7 percent increase over 2002; and the reported offering amount was \$673,108.03, a 2.9 percent increase over the reported amount for 2002.