

United Church of God, *an International Association* **General Conference of Elders Meeting Report**

Monday, May 5, 2003—Cincinnati, Ohio

Monday the elders and wives had the choice of attending up to five of the 15 workshop sessions available.

Life Innovations Certification: This half-day seminar allowed ministers and wives to be certified to use the marriage counseling instruments provided by Life Innovations. These include the whole range of Prepare/Enrich profiles for both premarital and marriage enrichment counseling. (Larry Salyer)

Speaking Skills Part I—Creating Sleeplessness: This session explored ways to add passion, intensity, energy and life to messages. (Arnold Hampton and Fred Kellers)

Speaking Skills Part II—Effective Interactive Teaching: This session addressed the skills needed to conduct effective interactive Bible studies, classes, training sessions and discussions. (David Johnson and Randy Schreiber)

Effective Marriage Counseling: This session used an interactive approach to discuss marital problems a pastor may face in his pastoral experience. (Gary Antion and Doug Horchak)

Three Steps to Effective Referral Counseling: This seminar looked at the minister's role in helping members obtain professional, specialized counseling when it is needed. (Dennis Luker and John Cafourek)

PowerPoint Basics: This workshop looked at the basic rules of presentation for sermons or Bible studies. (Randy Schreiber)

PowerPoint Advanced: This seminar provided those who had a basic knowledge of PowerPoint with a chance to learn more. (Jim Franks)

Maximizing Your Youth Pastoral Skills: This workshop featured a short PowerPoint presentation to highlight the ongoing efforts of the United Church of God to serve our youth, followed by a discussion on ways to help them connect with God and the work He is doing through the Church. A panel of ministers who serve on the Youth Education Team, at United Youth Camps and in a public high school were on hand to answer questions and moderate the discussion. (David Treybig, Larry Greider, James Capo and Dan Salcedo)

Financial Planning for the Ministry: This session addressed some of the unique financial planning issues faced by the UCG ministry. (Britton M. Taylor, CFP, Registered Investment Advisor)

Getting to Retirement: This lecture was designed to give some specific strategies for the ministry to maximize returns and minimize risk. The instructor gave some of the tips he gave students when teaching finance at Ambassador. (Aaron Dean)

Developing Leadership Mentoring Skills: This seminar looked at how mentoring can help our membership and leadership reach their full potential by conserving and transferring special know-how in areas of spiritual leadership and development. (Richard Pinelli and Doug Horchak)

Maximizing Your Leadership Skills: This seminar focused on how and why we should master our personal leadership skills to be more effective as a servant and an individual. The presenter holds a master's degree in leadership from Bellevue University where he serves as an adjunct faculty member. (Greg Thomas)

Maximizing Your Health Through Exercise: This seminar looked at:

1. How much exercise is needed for health benefits vs. weight loss vs. achieving a high level of physical fitness.
2. Establishing the habit of regular activity vs. a crash course in self-inflicted misery each January.
3. Why your metabolism doesn't have to slow down as you age.
4. Common exercise myths.
5. Some simple ways to get more activity into your days.

The presenter has 20 years experience as a fitness instructor/trainer, is certified by the American Council on Exercise and has been an adjunct instructor in the Exercise and Sport Science Department at Colorado State University. (Jacque Melear)

Living the Life of a Ministerial Wife: This ladies' symposium discussed the following areas: Your value to the Church, being a support system to your husband, making your health a priority and positive parenting. (Moderator—Judy Servidio; panel—DeLee Hargrove, Dee Kilough, Jane Suckling and Jenny Bradford)

Maximizing Your Computer Skills: The advent of the computer and the Internet has revolutionized the work of the ministry. This session offered tips on Internet resources and Bible software programs. (Vic Kubik and Larry Walker)

Concluding Remarks

Clyde Kilough commented on the peaceful, enjoyable meetings held this year, and encouraged the assembled elders and wives to use the times of peace to look back and take stock so we can move forward.

He said the seminars had been designed to help the elders grow individually. In order to truly maximize our ministry as a group, we must also minimize our casualties. In the context of war, we often hear the strange phrase, "friendly fire." Between 17 and 28

percent of casualties in the first Gulf War were caused by friendly fire—soldiers on the same side killing each other.

The basics of combat have always been the same: Where am I? Where's my buddy? Where's the enemy? Friendship is keeping track of each other, Mr. Kilough said.

There's a lot in the Bible about friendly fire in the spiritual sense. There are two tendencies when fired on by a friend: to get discouraged or to fire back. Some are wounded right now, Mr. Kilough said. How many times have we wounded others?

Wounded people can't fight very effectively. Wounded elders minimize our effectiveness. Christ is sensitive to friendly fire, because He probably has experienced it the most.

When we find out we have wounded others, our first reaction almost always is, "I didn't mean to." But that doesn't make it hurt any less. We need to go to our brother, repent, forgive.

Ephesians 4:2-3 gives us some of the "high-tech" tools we need to avoid friendly fire.

"With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Mike Bennett

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