

# United Church of God *an International Association*

Clyde Kilough  
Chairman

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President

## Letter From the Chairman December 3, 2004

Hello again everyone,

The Council of Elders convenes next week in Cincinnati for our quarterly conference, so the last few days have been quite busy preparing for that. One of my pre-meeting jobs is to solicit from the Council and administration their lists of discussion items, and from it construct the meeting agenda. The word *agenda* comes from a Latin word literally meaning “that which is to be done.” With this on my mind, two events in recent days made me revisit an important question that we all need to ponder quite often: “Just what is God’s agenda?” What is on His “to do” list?

When Jesus neared the end of His life on earth He told the Father, “I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4), but in reality that was only completing one item on Their agenda. Phases of Their work of “bringing many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:10) have always been in progress, and sometimes we are reminded in dramatic ways of the deeds that God the Father and Jesus Christ are bringing about on a daily basis. Two examples:

On Tuesday I had the joy of baptizing a new sister in the faith, a lady just three days shy of her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Like many of us before, she had been spiritually dissatisfied with her beliefs for a long time, and was searching for the truth. Nevertheless, as she thought she should, when she got on a city bus one day she tried to “witness” to the bus driver. As she humorously related to the group assembled for her baptism, “that was my first mistake!” The bus driver turned out to be a Church member, who kindly listened but started asking some probing questions in return that got her to rethinking her position. Intrigued, she began to regularly ride his route, sometimes making up to three one-hour circuits in a row without getting off, just to be able to talk about God. Talking soon led to reading our booklets and *The Good News*, which led to answers to her nagging questions. She eventually began coming to services and now has begun a new life!

In addition, last Sabbath the Sacramento, California, congregation had the privilege of hearing a sermon by David Baker, the UCG pastor in upstate New York and the coordinator of our work in Asia. He gave an inspiring account, illustrated with slides, of his most recent trip to the Philippines, Sri Lanka, India and Myanmar (formerly Burma), telling of how God is working with individuals and groups in some of the most remote parts of the earth. Some, like the lone UCG member in Pune, India, stand courageously in their faith despite facing harsh persecution because of their conversion.

Across the subcontinent in Kolasib, a city in the region of Mizoram in the far northeastern arm of India, is a large group of over 250 members of the Church of God (Israel), in a totally different circumstance. You may remember their story, related in two *United News* articles written by Mr. Baker and Joel Meeker (see the January 2003 and the March/April 2004 editions, or view them on our web site [www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org) [search word: *mizoram*]). We didn’t find them—they found us, making contact a few years ago after diligently researching to see if any other churches held the same doctrines. They mainly desire to be a part of a larger body, a more effective tool for preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God to the whole world.

Mr. Baker's account of the efforts of a few scattered people in Myanmar to be a godly light in a Buddhist nation—and their desire to learn all they can of God's truth—was equally inspiring. Listening to his sermon and looking into the faces projected on the screen, I thought, "Maybe they can learn more from us about doctrine, and maybe we can learn more from them about zeal!" If you need a little dose of inspiration, take the time to search out and read these articles.

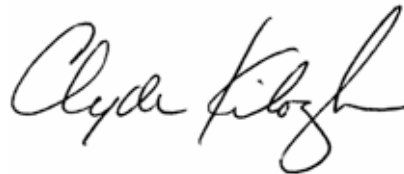
Most of you will read the news from the Council meetings next week, and we certainly draw encouragement from the reports and statistics about what is going on in the work of God. But when you see past the statistics into real-life stories such as these, it has a far greater impact. I find such accounts to be spiritually refreshing. They serve as reminders that, while we go about our daily routines, God is working on His agenda of "Preaching the Gospel, Preparing a People" all over the world. We discover it was sometimes right under our noses in our own community, and yet simultaneously He is achieving the same results in far-flung and nearly inaccessible places that few of us will see in this lifetime.

It's true, what Paul said: "But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased" (1 Corinthians 12:18). Once in that Body, God has continually updated agendas, "to do lists" of spiritual projects, for us individually and collectively. Following Jesus Christ, it is essential that our priority focus is to "be about My Father's business" (Luke 2:49), and to be diligently seeking out His will for our lives.

Please talk with God about blessing the Council meetings December 7 to 14 by granting us wisdom, discernment, creative thinking, solutions to problems, foresight, continued good teamwork and camaraderie, etc. As always, we have a lot of detailed items on our agenda, and they are all bits and pieces of our Father's big agenda of preaching the gospel and preparing a people. It is truly encouraging for all of us to hear so often, from so many people, that you keep the Council and home office in your prayers, especially when we have these meetings. We know that our Father's business is a far larger task than we can handle on our own strength, and that our human limitations often get in the way of what He would like to do. But we also have full confidence in His promises to be with all of His people, to help us grow and help us do the work to which we have been called.

Please pray as well for the scattered members in His Church, those who don't have the luxury of regular fellowship or Sabbath services. Pray for the new members, those just learning to walk in this newness of life, which often requires stepping out on faith. And pray that God will send more laborers, because we are all keenly aware that the fields are full of people who need spiritual direction, healing and hope.

Thank you, and may God be with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clyde Kilough". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Clyde" being more prominent than the last name "Kilough".

Clyde Kilough