

# United Church of God *an International Association*

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Chairman

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President

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Greetings Fellow Elders,

I hope your summer has been both pleasant and successful so far and, for those in the United States, that you have been able to endure the heat that has hit nearly every part of the country. Here in Portland, Oregon, noted for cool and wet weather, we have hit 108 degrees so far this summer and woe to those without air conditioning!

Dyanne and I have been enjoying an extended visit from our older son, daughter-in-law and 2-year-old granddaughter as our son takes work-related classes here in the Portland area. Having waited until after we reached 60 years of age to get our first grandchild, you can imagine why the August agenda is arriving late.

This coming Friday the Council will begin attending to the business of the 2006/2007 fiscal year. On the early side we will look at the year-end reports for the last fiscal year. God has been very good to us in providing a greater than expected income for the last year, a highly unified spirit within the Council and an excellent working relationship between the Council and the president and home office. We hope to take these pluses and with them bear more fruit.

A couple of highlights for this session will be a proposal from the president on how to move forward with our educational efforts. A comprehensive 30-page report has been given to the Council this last Friday, and we will all need to give it a full read before the meetings begin. In the early stages United grew like Topsy—much good effort and, for that matter, good product, but now that we can look back on a decade of efforts, it is obvious that we need to coordinate and focus our efforts.

As mentioned in earlier letters to the GCE membership, we need to be a “fruits-based organization,” and in order to bear much fruit, we need to be able to measure our achievements. The education proposal contains suggestions for assessing whether the outcomes of our programs are in line with what we desire to achieve.

On another front, we came out of the May meeting with a sense that we needed better coordination of our seminars and workshops at the annual meeting of the GCE. That coordination is not needed because of the quality of these events, but to eliminate duplication of efforts. It has been suggested that Ministerial Services coordinate all the educational efforts for the ministry so as to avoid duplication and have all educational events, including the GCE, move the ministry in the same direction. This will be another topic of discussion.

The brainstorming session in May met with very positive comments both from the Council and those who read the reports to the GCE. We will continue where we left off in May. There is probably no greater exercise of good governance than to use senior personnel to set a vision for the organization. There is no better way to set the vision than to identify our greatest needs and meet them and our greatest liabilities and eliminate them.

The new members of the Council coming on board will need to select the committees on which they plan to serve. This will open the door for continuing our ongoing discussion of the role of our committees in fulfilling our governance responsibilities. One of the challenges of the Council is to continue the move to separate governance from administration. The Council has turned over significant control of administration to the president and his staff, and the transition has been quite smooth. The next challenge will be coming to a unified understanding of what our governance role is as a body of 12 men on the Council. Our assessment of the efforts of staff is a major part of governance. The brainstorming begun in May is an initial step in strategic thinking and a move toward more effective strategic planning.

In the same vein, we will continue working toward common meaning for common terms. I mentioned in an earlier letter to you that one interesting aspect of organization is that we first develop a common vocabulary and then work toward a common definition for that vocabulary. All the Council members have understood that Article 8.1 of the Bylaws created a Council of Elders to provide “direction and oversight” to the organization. The understanding of what that term means and how it is applied has varied significantly. Coming to a common definition of this commonly used term is one of our ongoing tasks.

With these things said, I believe the rest of the agenda speaks for itself. As usual, we will try to keep you up to date on the activities of the meetings through the Council reports.

Please keep all of us in your prayers that both our efforts and their outcomes are pleasing to God.

On behalf of the Council of Elders,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Dick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert Dick