

Home Office Update November 13, 2003

Dear Brethren,

From November 2 through 4, the national United Youth Camps team was in town for their annual meetings. These are important discussions that allow them (12 people total) to assess past camps and then plan for the next year. I was able to sit in on a number of their sessions. It is clear that our summer camps and winter camp continue to enjoy outstanding success. The directors and hundreds of volunteer staff members deserve a hearty “thank you” for their caring and effective efforts with our young people.

At the conclusion of each camp, staff, campers and parents are surveyed about their experiences. The results of these surveys (some 1,200+) are compiled into one overall report. The statistics and comments are most impressive! I thought I would share with you just a few items from this report.

- Developing a relationship with God and learning His ways was listed by 71 percent of the campers, 73 percent of the staff and 75 percent of the parents as the main goal of camp.
- More than 90 percent of campers, staff and parents felt that the camps had accomplished their goals.
- Approximately 96 percent of the campers stated that staff members made them feel accepted most of the time.
- Parents rated the impression their children had of camp at 4.75 (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest).

Here are a few comments:

- “This has been my first year at camp. I never expected to learn so much” (Camper).
- “I feel the UYC program is doing a great job in making camp fun and educational” (Camper).
- “Camp created an environment that made me feel at peace. The ‘zone’ was a taste of God’s Kingdom” (Camper).
- “I have never seen so many young people enthusiastic about others’ achievements and caring for others” (Staff).
- “It was amazing to watch the campers work together and support each other and blossom spiritually. It was so inspiring!” (Staff).
- “Our daughter enjoyed all the activities, even the rainy ones. She enjoyed the ministers coming in and visiting with them. She made many new friends and had a lot of fun. She also profited from the study of the Bible” (Parent).

Jesus Christ said: “Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me” (Matthew 18:5). He also told His disciples in Matthew 19:14 to “let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Our camp program is clearly “receiving” our young people and directing them to God. Let us make sure as parents and members of God’s family that this approach is an ongoing one in our homes and congregations. This is a major part of our mission to prepare a people who are ready for the return of Christ.

Highlights of this report include two updates about Ambassador Bible Center, which is preparing for the new year even as mini-samplers are being conducted across the country. We also have an update about the new hymnal supplement, which I trust everyone is enjoying.

Roy Holladay

Announcement: Ambassador Bible Center Alumni

We are finalizing plans to create an ABC alumni association that will allow ABC alumni to maintain contact with one another and be a resource of information and experience for new students. The first step is to update our files with current contact information for all ABC alumni.

Therefore, if you have graduated from the Ambassador Bible Center, please send us the following information:

Name
Address
E-mail address
Phone number
Year of Graduation

Please e-mail this information to Linda Saar at lsaar_abc2003@zoomtown.com. Once we have contact information for everyone, we will be sending out a newsletter and survey about the alumni association.

Matthew Fenchel

Ambassador Bible Center

As winter begins to arrive, so will the new class of 2004. We have now accepted 32 students. Two have decided to wait for another year, so we now have 30. We just received four more new ones for this year and a fifth one for 2005. We should have a class between 35 and 40 this year. We are grateful to God for making this experience possible for them.

The textbooks have been ordered and should be here by the beginning of December. We will be busy planning for orientation that will take place on January 4. Classes will commence on the 5th. One change this year is in the area of instruction for the Gospels class. Richard Thompson, who has diligently taught the Gospels in both semesters, has opted to not teach. He was well-loved and well-received by the students. We will miss him.

To replace Mr. Thompson, we are pleased to have Donald Ward take the class. Teaching the Gospels is not new for Dr. Ward, as he taught the class at Ambassador for several years. He will incorporate some of his Fundamentals class into it, and that course will not be offered. We are grateful for Dr. Ward's willingness to sacrifice three weeks each semester to teach this valuable course. Dave Johnson is also preparing for Gospels instruction to back up Dr. Ward should he need any assistance.

In other news, Ralph Levy and Melvin Rhodes are off to Jefferson City, Missouri, to bring a mini-sampler to that section of the country. They are expecting between 100 and 150 for the ABC mini-sampler. President Roy Holladay and I will be off to Tacoma, Washington, to conduct a mini-sampler in the Northwest. The estimates are running a little higher, with between 150 and 200 expected to attend the program. Through the four years of conducting mini-samplers, there will have been nearly 2,000 brethren in 12 cities attend these biblically inspiring events! Some of the faculty members have also conducted seminars during the Feast of Tabernacles. That is 1 out of every 8 to 10 people in United. We are inspired by the enthusiasm for the Word of God and for this program.

Gary Antion

Hymnal Supplement

We hope you are enjoying the new supplemental hymnal. Some have asked how to break in the new books. Since the bindings are sewn, it is not absolutely critical; however it would be helpful as the new books are opened to take every 12 pages or so and smooth them out from top to bottom. This will help to loosen the glue.

We are in the process of producing piano accompaniment CDs for the supplemental hymnal. This should be especially helpful to those congregations that lack pianists. The CDs should be available by the end of the year. The hymns will also be available in MIDI format as well.

Producing a larger size (8 1/2 by 11 inches) wire-bound hymnal is being considered and may be available for pianists and song leaders in the near future.

We are also transposing the new supplemental hymnal for various instruments. Hymn transpositions will be available to instrumentalists so that instrumental ensembles will be able to accompany hymns. These should be available in the coming months.

Steve Myers

Personal Correspondence

We finished the month of October with a respectable 71 letters going out from PCD. The Feast was in September last year, when we answered only 33. On the Internet side, 68 e-mail answers were sent out in October.

Typically, there are some unique questions that come through, and this month was no exception. A subscriber asked which of our publications mentioned that *The Pampered Chef* supports pro-abortion organizations. (Actually, we never mentioned it, but the company did this at one time. It since has dropped the support, due to the controversy it stirred up.) And an inmate writes of his difficulties in getting the chaplain to understand that he should be teaching people to keep the Sabbath and Holy Day laws.

Someone “checking us out” wants to know if we truly follow *all* of the commandments—“including the fourth,” he specified! Another wants to know if Satan inspired the institution of Father’s Day, Mother’s Day, Grandparent’s Day and Animal’s Day.

We had four questions about the spirit in man and three letters about new moons. Three more came in on Genesis 6 and “the sons of god.” A man from Nigeria asked about reincarnation and explained that the doctrine is embedded in many African religions.

One person wrote that he had read the story of WCG’s breakup as told by a WCG official—and that he didn’t believe it. He wanted to know our side of the story. Another question about church organizations came from one who asked what differences there are between the UCG and the PCG. He asked, “Doesn’t the PCG have ‘the mantle of Herbert W. Armstrong,’ because it secured the copyright on [some of] his publications?”

There were moving letters, like the one from a member doing hard time in prison for a complex matter. And a mother who lost a daughter to suicide several years ago wonders if there is hope that she will be resurrected. A lady asked if there is hope that her brother who was cremated will be resurrected. It is wonderful to be able to explain the hope that God’s plan offers.

Cecil Maranville