

United Church of God *an International Association*

Robert Dick
Chairman

Clyde Kilough
President

Home Office Update August 18, 2005

Dear Brethren,

This is a shorter-than-usual Home Office Update, but don't mistake brevity for a lack of action around here! Last weekend we took great delight in hosting a mass of visitors who flocked into the home office for the 2005 Ambassador Bible Center graduation exercises. Family and friends celebrated with the students a very successful year of accomplishment and personal growth, not only in their studies, but in extracurricular service and social activities.

Two weeks ago we had two profitable days of meetings cementing plans for media production once the new Media Center is completed. Nine men, who will be involved in such functions as program presenters, editors, technical staff, internet development, advertising, and marketing, participated in mapping our direction for producing television and Web-based programs. We covered a myriad of topics including a proposed name for the program, the presenters and guests, program format and over 30 program topics, production schedules, and strategies for program placement on cable access stations. November is our target month to start shooting TV programs, with the first one going on cable access stations at the end of December. We will be reviewing all of these details with the Council of Elders at its upcoming meeting next week. Needless to say, we are quite excited about putting the Media Center into full use, and being able to have a home office produced program represents a big step forward in our capacity to preach the gospel. You will be hearing much more about this in the near future.

Over 30 people will be coming in this weekend for the five-day ABC Mini-sampler that begins Monday morning. The Council starts with committee meetings on Wednesday and its official quarterly meeting beginning Thursday afternoon. I'm leaving at noon today to visit the last camp of the summer, Camp Heritage in Pennsylvania, and spend some time with the teens and staff this weekend. We have had glowing reports from the camp program this year, many in particular noting the high level of character and commitment to God that so many of these teens are displaying. That is a tribute to you parents, first and foremost, and the youth development programs for which so many have dedicated their energies. Thank you—the fruits are most encouraging in the lives of these pre-teens, teens and young adults!

That's all for now. Let's keep our focus, and continue to center our lives on being about our Father's business.

Clyde Kilough

Editorial Update

Rather than a print run of 100,000 as reported earlier for the new booklet *Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension*, we've decided to expand the print run to 140,000.

This is by far our largest initial print run for a booklet. By way of comparison, as recently as a year ago our initial print run for a booklet was 80,000.

We expanded the print run to meet expected demand over the next few months. In addition to offering it prominently in the July-August *Good News*, we are offering it in a letter to 200,000 *Good News* subscribers in a letter being mailed this week. We expect between 30,000 to 40,000 responses to the letter, which will keep our mail processing staff busy!

In addition to that, we will be offering the booklet in combination with a subscription to *The Good News* in ads reaching several hundred thousand people in the next few months.

We receive a large number of requests for material on marriage and parenting, so we expect this booklet to be one of our most popular ever. All members should receive their copy in the mail shortly.

Scott Ashley

Feast of Tabernacles Update: Melaka, Malaysia

The Malaysian Feast of Tabernacles site has been moved to the modern, newly-renovated City Bayview Hotel in central Melaka. About 40 brethren from Australia, England, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the United States are already planning to attend in Melaka this year. The City Bayview Hotel is within walking distance or short taxi ride of many local cultural, historic and family attractions. Photos of the hotel and other information about the Melaka site can be found at <http://www.ucg.org.au/FOT/2005mm.asp/>. Superior rooms with single or double occupancy are US\$37 per night, including buffet breakfast. Other room types are available at discounted rates. If you would like further information about this site, please contact Jeff Caudle by email at jeff_caudle@ucg.org or phone +64-9-8175496 (Auckland, New Zealand).

Jeff Caudle

Personal Correspondence

July mail was unusually low for three weeks and then, it came flooding in during the last week of the month. We sent out 87 regular mail letters and one e-mail.

Encouragingly, we had several letters from people who seem to be solid prospective members. One couple writes of conflicts they encountered in their Sabbath-keeping church when they began to keep the Holy Days, and they realized that the church was not part of the one Christ founded. Another tells of the trouble he keeps running into by asking pointed questions (about the true biblical doctrines) in his church; it just so happens that we have a UCG congregation in his city, and we suggested that he contact our pastor.

A listener to *The Good News* Radio writes that he recognized the familiar teachings of the Church of God of decades ago and asks about our history. A reader who seems to understand the truth, which is changing her life, asks for guidelines on how one person can change her entire family. We obviously steered her towards concentrating on her example. A subscriber who has read the entire series of *Left Behind* rapture novels read our reprint article on the subject, and he tells us that he realized immediately that the rapture is not biblical. A substance abuse counselor tells us how he regularly uses our literature to help his clients.

We didn't connect as well with some others. One lady cancelled her subscription, because she thinks that we teach a second chance at salvation. Another was sharply critical of *The Good News* article about lessons learned in the 60 years since WW II, thinking that we are pro-war and part of the religious right.

An inmate tells us he enjoys having “a captive audience” (his actual words!) to preach to about the Sabbath and wants us to send a minister to “raise up” a church there! A person with a Rastafarian hairstyle asked if we thought that would keep him from going to heaven. But the letter that takes the cake for being the most unusual this month was from a person who is looking for chalk drawings of Jesus. He wrote that our PO Box number is *almost* the same as one that the distributor of these drawings used in the 1970s. Since we have a similar box number, he wondered if we could put him in touch with the artist. We offered him *Jesus Christ: The Real Story!*

Cecil Maranville

Personal Correspondence: Vertical Thought and Youth

The VTPC count for July was back up in the normal range, with a total of 76 letters answered. We received a couple of questions regarding prophecy, specifically asking whether or not we could accept Bible prophecy as true, and also then asking how one could tell a false prophet from a true one. There was a question regarding the shooter in the Living Church of God congregation in Wisconsin, showing that our youth are also still struggling to understand why tragedies such as that can happen. Following popular trends today, we received a question about gothic dress and culture, asking if it is acceptable for a Christian. Another young person wrote in to ask if euthanasia is scripturally condoned. There was a question regarding the differences between Islam and Christianity, the Bible and the Koran. As the Muslim faith becomes more prominent in the news, and more prominently associated with terrorism, it may well be that we see more questions along this line in the future.

Tom Clark