

# United Church of God *an International Association*

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Dear Fellow Elders,

The February meeting of the Council of Elders is just one week away, and I wanted to get this letter to you before the weekend starts. Due to our experience with difficult travel to Cincinnati in February, we have traditionally met in a warmer setting for this one meeting. As someone said just a little over a week ago as they left Cincinnati to participate in the Festival planning meetings held in Dallas, "I went from zero to 70 in two hours!"

For the last two years we have been in San Antonio for the February meeting, but this year San Diego underbid San Antonio considerably for housing, so we will be there starting next Thursday.

As most of you know, this is the big meeting of the year for the Council as we look at the annual budget and operation plan in preparation for presenting it to you in May at the annual GCE meeting.

It has been an exciting year budgetarily. Last June we gave Media and Communications Services an extra \$100,000 out of surplus and in December another \$531,500 from what turned out to be a growing surplus. Media will plow the later bump into advertising in *Reader's Digest*, *Parenting* and *American Baby* in order to reach a diverse audience. In addition to all of this, the Council in its December meeting approved paying off the home office mortgage, which will save us more than \$400,000 in interest over the life of the loan.

The Council members have received the proposed budget from the home office and we are looking at the largest increase in media spending in our history—an increase of \$1.6 million to go to Public Proclamation. While increasing the allocation for reaching the world, the budget does not forget training new ministerial candidates with a request to fund as many as five new ministerial trainee hires. We are also looking at increasing international subsidy to offset the decline in the value of the dollar.

Another component to our growth that tends to sneak up on us is the steady growth in donors and coworkers, topping 12,000 in January. You cannot help but consider the implications of the scriptural adage, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," and know that some of these men and women are but a step away from becoming members in the Church of God.

I hope you find the information above as inspiring as we do. Please follow the Council reports and keep the proceedings in your prayers that God will guide the deliberations and be pleased with the outcome.

On behalf of the Council of Elders,



Robert Dick