

notes from the **UMA** *items
ideas
inquiries*

June 1966

This is our second issue of "Notes from the UMA--Items, Ideas, Inquiries." Your response has been most encouraging, and we have had a wonderful opportunity to share the matters that are of importance to us. Let us now enter into our forthcoming conference in the perfect faith that the infinite Spirit of Jesus Christ which inspires each of us individually and collectively is directing us in the establishment of a perfect structure. Whatever emerges in our conference will be in divine order, and we will go forward unified in courage and faith and love and gratitude to God. We are a part of the great Truth. That Truth is based on love and faith. May our coming together at conference time be motivated and strengthened by that love and faith which makes us a great movement.

Russell A. Kemp's prayer at the end of these "Notes from the UMA" is a good one. Perhaps we can all join him in a unified thought that will strengthen our individual prayer.

Lloyd E. Felter, Kansas City, Missouri - "My suggestion is that the UMA be used as the womb in which a future body of Unity ministers and teachers can be formed (would there be woom enough for all of us?) without the pressures of the divided opinions which are so prevalent at the present time.

"The UMA is an organization that can be qualified as a tax-exempt entity; it is presently existent, and perhaps areas of the various districts can be drawn together."

Anna May Nielsen, New York, New York - "I have been wondering what status, if any, licensed teachers will have under the new arrangements. It would appear from the bylaws of the AUC that they will not have any part in the association.

"Those of us who took our training at the Training School, before the new system came into effect, did so in the understanding that we were completing all the training requirements for the ministry and that we could at any time apply for a minister's license if we took charge of a center. I assume that there has been no change in the regulations in this regard. It has always been my feeling that those who took the same training should receive the same recognition, and that the present distinction between ministers and teachers (under the old system, in which they took the same training) was somewhat artificial. Perhaps

something could be done to clarify the status of ministers and teachers.

"There is some concern lest the new organizational arrangements may enforce conformity to a more rigid pattern and thereby hinder the freedom of ministers, but knowing that the divine Spirit cannot be bound, I am confident that a framework will emerge that will ensure the freedom which is the strength of the Unity movement."

Joseph K. Stiegler, Everett, Washington - "Helmbold's letter of March to all UMA members, on page 3, emphasizes that only those Ministers on the payroll of a center or church are entitled to a vote! If this is to remain truly an association of Unity ministers then all ministers should have a vote whether they are assigned or not, if for no other reason than that they have given of themselves in their dedicated service to Unity. A minister should remain a voting member until removed from the rolls by resignation or malfeasance. Church or center representation only defeats the purpose and spirit behind the UMA.

"Last but not least--in Article 15, Section 3, regarding 'Quorum for Annual Meetings,' we believe that those ministers unable to attend the conference should be entitled to absentee ballots, or be given the opportunity to designate a proxy such as business corporations extend to their stockholders. Last year neither the church nor myself could finance the expenses for conference attendance, so we had no voice in the proceedings!"

Mary H. Hinkle, Fort Wayne, Indiana - "Because the 'seed' of any association of churches is the church itself . . . we should like to take you through the micropyle to the inner paradox of licensed freedom.

"We have just had an eventful week of dedicating our Unity Chapel to the will and the work of Jesus Christ. That dedication only comes to life through people. That dedication leaves only the realm of word formation as it becomes alive in us! Each one has a different concept of what that dedication means to him. All of these concepts are good--but they are all different. Consequently we come to the true purpose, or the true nature, of the church, which is communication. The true nature of a church is always to keep the lines of communication open between and among creative diversity!

"Dr. Rhine, of Duke University, said a most profound thing in regard to his own dedication to the science of parapsychology. He said: 'I am not so confident in any of my ideas that I get upset if someone doesn't agree with them.' This, I believe, is the loving, considerate, and understanding attitude of prayer of the Truth student. Through this attitude does the church become the channel for the communicating of ideas.

"As man is a threefold being (Spirit, soul, body), so do I

believe that the church is a threefold instrument of communication, its first function being that of Spirit. As Paul said to the Ephesians, 'There is one body and one Spirit . . . one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.'

"The church's second function of communication is that invested in its minister. Where the communication from Spirit is constantly and consistently good, breakdowns do occur in this second function. But they strengthen, rather than weaken, the system. This second function is based on the consciousness of the minister's own dedication to his calling, and if any blocking occurs at this point it is a challenge to greater growth. The seed of this consciousness is 'the call,' which is his and the church's soul purpose, that of the Absolute--All-Good. And we quote from another of Paul's letters, this one written to the Romans, 'For rulers are not a terror to good conduct but to bad. . . .He is God's servant for your good.'

"The third function of that communication is of the layman. The body of laymen must be communicators too. Here, again, the system can break down if no means is provided for them to communicate. They must understand, they must be informed, because to be informed is to be transformed. 'Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect,' reads Paul's letter to the Romans. It is the true nature of the church to keep this communication system in living order between Spirit, soul, and body.

"We who serve and attend a Unity church have a special dedication, for our very name implies a 'Unity of communication.' Our goal is to be unified so consciously in Spirit that we always hear the call to follow the Christ. By the very fact that we call ourselves Christians we have made Jesus Christ and His teaching our standard, and it is the church's business to keep us Christian... not by any particular sacrament or confession, but by making us aware that the name of anything is the nature of it.

"To be Christian, then, is to be inspired by, dedicated to, and confident in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. And if the Holy Spirit of God's love is invited into a church, the Christ in all people is the focal point of communication."

Joel W. Boehr, Tacoma, Washington - "When things do not seem to work easily toward a certain goal, a second look may be the 'stitch in time.' My second look caused me to ask myself: 'Do we really need the UMA or the AUC'?"

"This is not a criticism or an approval of the proposed AUC structure. And I hasten to praise those who have given such great energy to it. I am merely presenting the question; do we really want it and will it really be of benefit to us in the years to come?"

"1. Can we get along together? Ministers say: 'We all love each other, regardless of how we act!' I agree that the so-

called voice of dissention is essential if change and growth are to come about. However, with all our love, I have had trouble dovetailing the hostile emotions, the insinuations, and the fear of power politics.

"2. Unity ministers love their independence. Those who have worked in the Field Department would probably (with memories of frustration) agree that the ministers are so independent that it has often been an impossibility to bring changes that would benefit Unity as whole. Moves are made or not made for personal criteria, and such incidents have hurt many a center or church and many a parishioner.

"3. Southern California has expressed its independence through regional incorporation. One of its ministers has indicated to me that this group might establish its own training school so that prospective teachers can be taught what the group thinks they should be taught (feeling that Headquarters is departing from the Jesus Christ teaching).

"4. The Unity teaching worldwide thought regarding Unity will be established through Unity School, not through the field ministries that reach only a fraction of the people the School does.

"5. Most of the blessings an 'organization' would offer the individual leader could be handled in other ways or gotten along without. Radio and television are already in the hands of the School. The School might possibly offer new religious education material for children and young people of all ages. As for the suggested consulting specialists the organization would provide regarding building, financing, counseling, teaching, publicity, and advertising I wonder if the ministers will use them? If an equivalent amount of such strong differing opinion will be involved in the formation of religious education material, I would prefer to see the School handle it and offer it to the centers or churches on a take it or leave it basis.

"6. Retirement? After caring for those on the plan now, each minister would be responsible for his own retirement program.

"7. Ordination and placement? The School would train and ordain according to their standards. Placement would be left to centers and ministers.

"8. Taxes? They can be handled on an individual center basis.

"9. Protection? What are we going to do with the out-of-line ministers? If 'life is consciousness,' then let 'life' take care of them and us! If our good comes from God we know that every seeming 'you meant evil' situation will turn into a 'but God meant it for good' situation.

"10. Conference? The School might offer us a spiritual seminar once a year. They would plan it, not us; we would go there for a spiritual uplift and fellowship.

"11. Affiliation? We are affiliated in Spirit. We are 'open-ended,' so let anyone and everyone who so desires enjoy this affiliation. Perhaps your local Baptist minister reads Daily Word and he decides to call his church the 'Baptist Unity Church.' Let him! He will prepare the people for Truth that you can give, and he will give Truth to those who would not care to come to you. Love is affiliation enough. Let literal affiliation be dropped.

"12. Let us be independent; let's be 'inner-dependent.' Organization seems to create false security, dependence, and bickering. Drop the entire plan--both the UMA and the AUC! This will put us on our own, which is basically the way most of us want to operate anyway. There would no longer be the 'they' running things in the Field Department. What we teach will be up to us and no one need fear (as has been expressed) 'policy makers.' Our ministry will be our responsibility; we will be on our own--just us and God."

David Williamson, Lee's Summit, Mo. - "I am greatly shocked by the suspicion, character assassination, witch-hunts for heresy, and resistance to change being shown in Unity today. Honest disagreement and diversity of opinion are to be expected and even desired, but making public statements about fellow workers is ethically questionable.

"People have gotten impressions based on what they have heard or thought they have heard and have proceeded to publicly state or publish their impressions as a 'statement of fact.' Such flat statements of fact have been made recently about Unity ministers and workers that are absolutely untrue, distorted, and, to say the least, unkind. These public statements about fellow workers are irresponsible and unprofessional according to ministerial ethics or any other standards of Christian integrity. When a person's character or beliefs are not really understood or known but a negative impression is talked about with others and turned into damaging gossip, I cannot be convinced that this is the Jesus Christ way of handling differences. As I understand the Jesus Christ way, it involves quite different attitudes and ways of working with people.

"Some of those who are saying, 'Lord, Lord,' had better do as Unity has taught; namely, look at their own actions to see if they might not need to work on their own individual consciousness rather than trying to condemn, gossip about, and straighten out others. With all the talk we in Unity do about 'seeing the good,' I am continually amazed at our own inability to practice that most essential spiritual outlook. We would all do well to consider the Sermon on the Mount (especially the 7th chapter of Matthew) and Paul's ideas in Colossians: 'As persons chosen by God, then, consecrated and dearly loved, you must clothe yourselves with tenderness of heart, kindness, humility, gentleness, forbearance. You must bear with one another and forgive one another, if anyone has reason to be offended with anyone else. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must forgive. And over all these put on

love, which completes them and fastens them all together. Let the ruling principle in your hearts be Christ's peace, for in becoming members of one body you have been called under its sway. And you must be thankful. Let the message of Christ live in your hearts in all its wealth of wisdom. Teach it to one another and train one another in it with thankfulness, with psalms, hymns, and sacred songs. And whatever you have to say or do, do it all as followers of the Lord Jesus, and offer your thanksgiving to God the Father through him.'--Colossians 3:12-17, Good speed."

Russell Kemp, Monterey, California - "This is my prayer for the
UMA.

"The Spirit of Jesus Christ is the guiding light of the Unity Ministers' Association. All needed reorganization is brought to pass in a spirit of orderly, inspired wisdom, moderation, love, and consideration for the rights of all concerned.

"Peace is inspired by the Christ presence in our members, and all is well."

Unity School of Christianity
Lee's Summit, Missouri 64063

UNITY LEADERS PLAN EXPANSION MOVE

New plans for the expansion of the Unity movement were announced following a midyear council meeting of Unity ministers at Unity School of Christianity, Lee's Summit, Missouri, the week of January 17. The plans call for the formation of a new organization of Unity centers and churches which will take its place with the two already existing Unity organizations--Unity School of Christianity and The Fillmore Foundation.

The proposed new corporate entity, to be called the Association of Unity Churches, will assume responsibilities formerly performed by the Field Department of Unity School. The field work has grown so large that it no longer can be administered effectively without formal organization and incorporation. The newly proposed Association will be expected to encourage growth of this facet of the Unity Movement, and the Association will take its place alongside the other two bodies as an integral part of the Unity Movement.

Some of the functions this proposed organization will assume, if the plans of the council are carried out, will

be to ordain ministers, to place ministers, to offer help in the fields of Sunday School, young people's work, and adult spiritual education, to administer a ministers' retirement plan and field expansion plans, and to assume financial responsibility for all Association functions.

With the release of the foregoing functions to the new Association, Unity School will dissolve its Field Department and concentrate on its principal activities of publishing magazines and books, conducting a worldwide prayer and healing ministry, and developing a comprehensive university-level educational program. The Fillmore Foundation will continue its financial and developmental activities related to both Unity School and the proposed Association.

Charles R. Fillmore, Executive Vice-President of Unity School of Christianity, told the ministers at the close of the council sessions:

"We welcome this new Association to stand with Unity School and The Fillmore Foundation as mutual partners in spiritual service to humanity."

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