

New 'library boss' works hard to keep up services

By Heather Sloman Woodin
Gazette City Hall reporter

Tom Armitage hasn't had time to move into his new office at the Cedar Rapids Library.

He was promoted to director of the library two weeks ago but he's still stationed in his old office with the "Assistant Director" nameplate beside the door.

"I don't want to take half a day right now to move all this 20 feet down the hall to the other office," he says.

Armitage, 4529 Walker St. NE, came to the Cedar Rapids Library as assistant director in February 1986. Exactly one year later, he took over as Acting Director when Tom Carney resigned.

Now he's adjusting to his role as director and he's not doing that by standing still. "It's no fun playing catch up and it's no fun keeping status quo," he says. The library's board of directors is searching for a new assistant director but that person probably won't be appointed for a couple of months.

Meanwhile, Armitage, 40, is trying to make progress at the main library downtown as well as the Kenwood and Edgewood branches while dealing with daily details: unruly patrons, problems with the elevator, keeping the plants looking good.

His desk is a potpourri of projects and files. "I'm suspicious of anyone with a clean desk," he notes.

Among all the papers are an empty Pepsi can, cigarettes, lighter, ashtray and pictures of his family.

A blue and white "Library Boss" pin, a gift from staff members who attended a library conference, is stuck in the bulletin board.

Armitage works a regular shift at the reference desk and helps out when lines get long at the circulation desk. Staff members — including Armitage — are on a rotating schedule so everyone works their fair share of weekends and evenings.

"Ultimately, the reason we're here is to serve the public. The public is the boss. I only see the board once a month as a unit but we deal with the public every day," he said.

Away from work he spends time with his wife, Linda, and two children. Anne, 16, attends Kennedy High School and Nick, 8, is a student at Pierce Elementary.

On days off and during vacations Armitage likes to attend auctions, refinish furniture, camp and travel.

He was born in Torrington, Wyo., and grew up in California. He served as a communications technician in the Navy, then earned a bachelor's degree in history from Kansas State University, Pittsburg, Kan., in 1973 and a master's degree in library science from the University of Missouri, Columbia, a year later.

He worked two years as assistant director at the Ottumwa Public Library. From 1977 until 1986 he was director at the Fort Dodge Public Library.



Tom Armitage

Iowans to attend Moon church meeting

By Lyle Muller

Gazette Johnson County Bureau
NORTH LIBERTY — The Rev. Mel Valdez admits to being wary about the trip he is about to take to the Far East.

The Unification Church, also known as the Moonies, is hosting the trip. Valdez, a United Methodist minister, was not eager to be identified with the controversial following. "I was really negative about this," he said.

But like the Rev. Paul Beets, pastor at the Gospel Tabernacle Church, 749 Old Marion Rd. NE, Valdez finally relented to the Moonies' invitation. On Monday, both men join about 360 other American pastors from various religions on a trip to South Korea, where they are to attend a two-week-long theological conference.

It's a lavish program that followers of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon say is designed to promote dialogue, research and prayer that will help fulfill Jesus Christ's vision for the kingdom of heaven on Earth.

Skeptics say the program is an effort to gain acceptance among the leaders of the world's longer established religions, using an exotic trip to the Far East as bait.

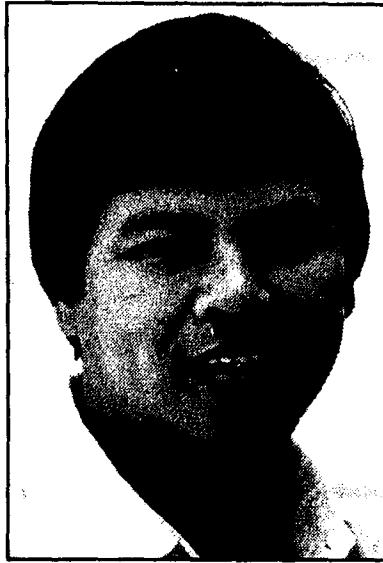
"We don't agree on theology," Valdez said, referring to the Moonies. "But we still agree that we can work together in helping the poor. And I appreciate that."

Besides, the trip gives Valdez a chance to also go to the Philippines, his homeland. That was the big selling point, he said.

The Unification Church says it is flying about 10 Iowans to the conference, part of a series of 10 conferences that began in July and will conclude in December.

They're putting on quite a show in South Korea. Plans to go to Japan were scrapped because airline connections could not be made.

Mixed in with presentations on the history and activity of the Unification Church, group discussions and devotions are sightseeing trips, shows and top class hotels.



Rev. Mel Valdez



Rev. Paul Beets



Terry Dickens

"It took me about three or four months to decide to go," Beets said. But a few other area ministers have gone to previous Moonie-sponsored conferences and enjoyed it, so Beets finally decided to go.

"By no means, am I a fool," Beets said. "I know there's something in it for them."

But Beets, who said he does not consider the Unification Church a Christian church, said he expects to take advantage of the opportunity and learn something. "We can disagree on things, but I can always listen to what he (Moon) is about."

Valdez concedes that the trip, especially with the Moonies willing to help defray his expenses, was too good to pass up. He will be able to mix business and pleasure in South Korea, as well as visit some of his family. His wife, Leth, also will go to the Philippines.

Valdez, pastor at the North Liberty and Tiffin United Methodist Churches, has not been home since 1979; his wife since 1983.

Valdez said he is eager to challenge the Moonies' doctrine and share his own religious views, regardless of how different they are with those of his hosts.

Moon started the Unification Church in South Korea in 1954. He has more than 3 million believers in more than 100 countries.

The church's basic teachings come from the "Divine Principle," which Moon wrote. The doctrine says God wants to re-establish natural order, an effort that Jesus Christ started but was prevented from completing when he was crucified. The work that Jesus could not complete now falls on the shoulders of Moon, with order to be re-established through strict discipline, the doctrine says.

Before the American ministers leave on the trip, it's clear that they disagree with the Moonies, said Terry Dickens, whose job is contacting local ministers and eliciting interest in the overseas program.

Dickens said he expects skepticism. "Often, people say you're just trying to convert me," he said.

Dickens is responsible for an area that includes Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, Grinnell and Ottumwa. He said his ministry is an evangelistic one without a fixed congregation.

"One would hope it (interest in the conference) is more than just seeing Korea," he said.

"In the conference, the aim isn't to convert one to another person's theology. There's an incredible need for ecumenicalism at this time."

A seminary graduate living in the Quad Cities area, Dickens said he is trying to contact as many local ministers as possible.

He rejected suggestions that the conferences are just glamour trips for people in a profession already getting its share of lumps from television evangelists and followings, such as the Moonies, that are criticized for their fund-raising tactics and expenses.

So why go to Korea, instead of just flying ministers to somewhere in the United States? "You see a certain quality of faith in the Korean people and it's inspiring," Dickens said. Visitors will be able to see different religions, such as Buddhism and Shintoism and the shack where Moon founded his church.

Ministers who cannot pay all of their travel costs are given subsidies by the Unification Church. The church is picking up the tab for the 10 scheduled sessions, although Dickens said he did not know how much it would spend.

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ARMSTRONG BED & BATH — FOURTH FLOOR

Workshop for C.R. substitute teachers slated

It's "back to school" time for Cedar Rapids Community Schools substitute teachers.

CRISTA, the Cedar Rapids Iowa Substitute Teachers Association, will conduct its annual summer workshop from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Aug. 25 in Harding Middle School, 4801 Golf St. NE.

Coffee will be served during registration from 8 to 8:45 a.m.

The day's speakers will include: Stephen Daeschner, Cedar Rapids superintendent; James Scheib, Grant Wood Area Education Agency, with an update on recertification; Brad Colton, GWAEA; Code-A-Phone operators Karen James and Linda Meyer on procedures for hiring substitutes; Marlin Berg, executive director, Human Resource Management; Julia Campbell, director of personnel and Human Resource Management; and Marlene Hill, administrative assistant, personnel.

To finish the morning workshop, counselors Paul Moucka, Coolidge Elementary, and Larry Blum, Taft Middle School, will speak on behavior management.

A salad bar luncheon at \$5 per person will be available.

The afternoon workshop will begin with a two-hour state required program on child abuse presented by Carol Lensing, personal development facilitator. "Helpful Hints" will be presented by Melissa Fogle, elementary, and Frances Heaton, secondary.

Substitutes also will be given the choice of "Elementary Math" by Donna Spellman, math program facilitator, or "Computers" by Daniel Reyner, Wilson Middle School.

The workshop is sponsored by CRISTA and the staff development department of the Cedar Rapids Community Schools. Anyone wishing more information or wishing to pre-register may contact Kristi Kearney, 373-1639.

New officers for the 1987-88 school year are Karen Madsen, 2525 25th Ave., Marion, president; Pam Hoover, first vice president; Selma Brigham, second vice president; Kristi Kearney and Joyce Hingtgen, co-secretaries; and Janeen Jackson, treasurer. Also on the executive board are Bernice Kirby, Bill Kramer and Odessa Stout as representatives of elementary and secondary substitutes.

Host homes sought

Homes are needed for 14 German, French and Spanish students who want to spend this school year in Iowa.

Imre Takacs, president of International Student Exchange of Iowa, said an emergency need has developed because some families had to cancel their plans to host students because of economic conditions.

All students have studied English for four to seven years, are insured and have their own spending money. Interested persons may contact Takacs, toll-free, at 1-800-233-9035.