



# United Church of God

*an International Association*

## **eNews from Ministerial and Member Services**

Issue 312

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### **Personal From the President...**

Dear fellow servants of God,

#### **2018 Feast Coordinator Conference**

The annual Feast Coordinator Conference convened on February 6 and 7, using a combined web conference format, including additional training for newer coordinators live at the home office. Additionally, 10 home office staff contributed to presentations, for a total of 29 involved in the conference.



Linda Merrick, managing editor of internal publications, assigns articles to coordinators for the Festival brochure.

The newer coordinators and trainees were brought into the home office for orientation and additional review of procedures and policies. Face-to-face interaction has many advantages, and the interaction was very beneficial.

After the initial morning of training for the newer coordinators ended, all of our coordinators joined a web conference. I opened the conference and then a detailed analysis of Feast of Tabernacles planning began.

This year each coordinator is to train a designated assistant coordinator to create a larger pool of additional Feast coordinators for future years. A number of updates to the Festival Coordinator Manual will be implemented. Online registration and individual Feast websites will be upgraded to assist with getting information to both the coordinator and members.

A clarification will be made regarding using church approved housing versus searching and finding personal housing. This will be outlined in the Festival Planning Brochure. There will be two speaker teleconferences for each site prior to the Feast to improve communication and the messages at the Feast.

Other topics covered were special music, budgets, youth education and seminars, membership surveys, and Church employee ministerial transfers.

### ***Beyond Today***

Also, this was what we call "BT Week" when we record new *Beyond Today* television programs. On Wednesday, three programs were recorded which were "God's Enduring Love for Israel" by Darris McNeely, "Shocking Teachings of Jesus: The Dead Will Live Again!" by Steve Myers and "Pentecost: Your Need for the Holy Spirit" by Gary Petty. This brings the total number of programs recorded to date to 351.

In addition, Rick Shabi, Operation Manager for Finance, came from Florida to help finalize our projected 2018-2019 budget for all operations for the coming fiscal year. We are very pleased with the resources that God has given His Church and discussed in detail how to allocate funding for everything we do around the world. This will be further discussed by the Council of Elders during their meeting in East Texas at the end of this month before its presentation to the General Conference of Elders.

### **Return from South America**

Bev and I returned just over a week ago from Argentina. We are still reflecting on the wonderful experience of spending three days with a Sabbath and Holy Day-keeping group that has sought us out to pastor them. Our ministry in Chile has been traveling there regularly since October 2015 to provide pastoral services.

I have described in detail our meetings and impressions on my TravelArk blog which you can access at <http://v2.travelark.org/travel-blog/victorkubik/22>. I describe exactly where these people came from and their association and proposed future with the United Church of God. They already call themselves the United Church of God. I include many photos of the people we met and what we did.



Mario Seiglie and Victor Kubik give their sermons on Radio Atalaya in Misiones, Argentina.

One highlight was when Mario Seiglie and I spoke on their radio station a week ago Saturday night. Esteban Freiberger, one of the members owns this non-profit FM radio station called Radio Atalaya at 100.1 on the dial. He continually plays sermons by our Spanish-speaking ministers as well as Christian music through the day. He hosts a three-hour nightly program about the beliefs of the United Church of God. Mario and I gave shortened versions of the sermons that we delivered earlier in the day. Our time was divided into 15 minute sections with music played in between. I found this free format with ample time to express thoughts to be very refreshing and liberating as a speaker.

### **Making a Marriage Great**

While visiting our brethren in Argentina, my wife Bev and I celebrated our 36th wedding anniversary. With more than three and a half decades together, Bev and I have been through a lot. These include happy times as well as trying times.

At a Thanksgiving gathering a few years ago, one of my brothers produced a very old home movie that included scenes of a younger Bev and me. Even though there was no soundtrack from this old movie, laughter and humor was obvious. I wonder today what Bev and I would have thought if we knew what was in front of us back then. Since the time when that video was taken, we've served together in multiple congregations, had heartfelt times when we had to temporarily say goodbye to friends who had reached the end of life, and had more joyous times when we welcomed new members to the body of Christ. Like many others in the ministry, we've stayed up all night numerous times and have traveled together for multiple thousands of miles in the service of the church.

Bev and I have served together in Africa and Eastern Europe through church projects as well as LifeNets. We have seen firsthand the aftermath of radioactive horror in the Ukraine, helped with establishment of a children's rehabilitation center in Europe, made friends (actually more of a truce) with very large spiders in Africa, encouraged tardy workers for building projects in remote areas, and much more.

In short, we've been blessed with a rich, fulfilling and happy marriage. And we're certainly not finished yet!

Here's my point: when we were married some 36 years ago, we took our marriage vows with our eyes wide open. We knew what we were committing ourselves to. We knew, like other couples, that there would be great times, but that there would also be times when things might be tense and uneasy. I'm by no means boasting, because I'm certainly not perfect. But from personal experience--including in my own marriage, in helping many couples counsel for marriage, and in working with couples whose marriages have been in trouble--I believe that success in marriage comes from some core principles. Allow me to share a few with you:

**Mutual submission and respect in love.** When they are courting and first married, many couples idolize each other. No one could be more perfect, they believe. Courting and newly married couples do everything together and generally share everything in common.

Then reality sets in.

A small misunderstanding may inadvertently grow to something much bigger. A spat or fight may ensue. Doubts rise. How did this happen? This is a point of personal growth, where couples can either grow together more deeply in love, or they can start to grow apart if differences are not resolved. Here's a key: successful marriages--the kind that endure internal and external storms--are grounded in mutual respect. As Paul wrote, successful couples have a practice of "submitting to one another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21). The Bible is plain in how the husband has a leadership position in a marriage. But the Bible is also plain about a husband's obligation to actively love his wife. As Paul sums up, "each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband" (Ephesians 5:33, New Living Translation). That means that neither the husband or the wife ever do *anything* intentionally to harm the other, including any form of abuse.

**Successful marriages recognize physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions.** Men and women are quite different in their mental and emotional makeup. These differences are God-given. Understanding and appreciating them helps us deepen our human experience and know better what God is like. Successful marriages feature a lot of listening by both the husband and wife. And they feature honest and open communication, particularly when one doesn't think that the other understands a key point. When conflict arises, believing the best and forgiving one another can restore the relationship.

Continued and deepening physical and emotional intimacy represent key hallmarks to successful marriages. We in the church--especially--should know that this sacred intimacy represents one of the key points of attack by our spiritual adversaries. The world we live in hammers us incessantly with enticing messages of sexual bravado and forbidden pleasures. Because of our human nature, we must understand how vulnerable we can be to this awful temptation. Sexual adventure is artificially made to look great outside of marriage, even harmless. If one falls for this falsehood, they can be certain that a terrible bill will come due for illicit behavior.

To be successful, we must realize--from the first day onwards--that marriage represents a sacred covenant with God. As we stand before the minister, the marriage ceremony is one of the few times that a vow made to each other and to God is both appropriate and required. Once complete, the couple emerges from the ceremony in a dramatically different state. As we read in Malachi, "Did he [God] not make them one, with a portion of the [Holy] Spirit in their

union?" (Malachi 2:15, English Standard Version). The state of a married couple reflects the close and powerful relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church.

**Successful marriages take work.** Once the intoxicating days of courtship and early marriage wear on, couples need to be on guard that they don't neglect their mate and their marriage. Building love and deepening a marriage takes time, but the positive rewards are incredible. One can never take the other for granted. Marriage produces an environment where we can grow together and grow spiritually to be more in tune with God's will. Little things count, like recognizing your mate for a task well done, or leaving little notes of affection and remembering key dates and events, showing gratitude, work wonders. A regular "date"--minus kids or others where a couple can focus on each other without distraction--can revive and sustain a marriage.

Keep God and Jesus Christ the focus and bedrock of your marriage and look forward to years of fulfilling fun and experiences together. Make your marriage great!

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

## **From Ministerial and Member Services...**

### **Pastoral Transfers**

**Mr. Earl Roemer**, pastor of the United Church of God congregations in Anchorage and Soldotna, Alaska, will retire this summer, after 52 years of ministerial employment. Mr. Roemer will continue to serve as International Senior Pastor for Hong Kong.

This summer, **Mr. David Dobson**, and his wife, Denise, will transfer from Huntsville, Alabama, to Alaska, where he will pastor the Anchorage and Soldotna congregations, as well as continuing to serve as International Senior Pastor for the Philippines.

After Mr. Dobson's transfer, **Mr. Gary Beam**, and his wife, Rhonda, will pastor the congregation in Huntsville (Alabama), in addition to his current assignment of Birmingham (Alabama), and Tupelo (Mississippi).

This spring, **Mr. Rick Beam** and his wife, Angela, will transfer from Paducah, Kentucky, to Rome, Georgia. Mr. Beam will pastor the congregations in Rome (Georgia), Chattanooga (Tennessee), and Gadsden (Alabama).

Mr. Beam will replace **Mr. Paul Burnes**, who has been serving as the interim pastor for the Rome congregation, with his wife, Dana, for the past year.

After Rick Beam's transfer, **Mr. Doug Collison** and his wife, Dianne, will pastor the congregations in Paducah (Kentucky), Cape Girardeau (Missouri), Henderson (Kentucky) and Poplar Bluff (Missouri). Mr. Collison has been serving as an assistant pastor for those congregations alongside Mr. Beam for the past year.

## **Elder Needed at Feast in Rockingham, Western Australia**

The Feast site in Rockingham, Western Australia, expects to be in short supply of speakers. We are looking for an elder who would be able to transfer to Rockingham for the entire Feast. UCG-Australia would assist with the cost of travel from the United States. Once at the Feast, the cost of food and travel is very affordable--\$1 USD exchanges for \$1.28 AUD.

If you have interest in serving the brethren in Rockingham, please contact Ministerial and Member Services.

-- Paul Vaughan

## **Update from Aaron Dean**

I would like to thank everyone for their prayers for an embolism I suffered, resulting in a 3-day stay at the hospital. The problem and solution all happened quickly, so I never sent out a formal prayer request. However when our media-savvy president (who was in South America) learns something and is concerned, then it seems the church world is mobilized even without a formal request. I thought I should give a brief explanation of what happened and the outcome.

At some point a blood clot had formed, became dislodged, and went through the heart and into the lungs, quickly resulting in an inability to breathe more than a handful of air. I was rushed to emergency on a Wednesday at 4:30 p.m., where they did CAT scans and other tests showing an oxygen level near 70%. The specialists wanted to do a procedure through the femoral artery up to the heart and spray chemicals into the lung to break up the clot. I was anointed by Gary Antion that evening and the pain subsided and I began breathing better.

By morning I was no longer a candidate for this operation, as the pain had subsided and I was breathing well with oxygen levels above 90%. I spent the next two days trying to get out of the hospital and was released at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday after 3 days and 3 nights--a good sign. It was not a heart attack, as tests showed my heart is strong and there appear to be no residual effects.

I went to the ABC activity that Saturday night and was back to work Monday. We are thankful it occurred in Cincinnati and not in the far reaches of Africa or Asia. No one can fully explain the why or when, but I will be a bit more cautious on long flights and monitor my blood to do my part to prevent any future occurrence. Michelle and I thank you for your cards and prayers and for God's quick intervention in a rather serious situation.

-- Aaron Dean

## **Work Begins on New Video Recording Studio Construction**

Just over a week ago construction began on the Church's new Video Recording Studio. The site has been cleared and concrete for the footers is being poured, which will support the pre-cast concrete walls and steel frame.

The project is on schedule and will take about six months for a July building completion date. It will then take about another 3 months or so to outfit the building with the new equipment, cameras, lighting and on-camera set.



Concrete is being poured for a new retaining wall alongside the existing warehouse loading dock.

Your prayers for the ongoing work on this project are very much appreciated, as we prepare for much needed space for video production capabilities in preaching the gospel of the Kingdom.

For ongoing updates about progress on the new studio, please follow UCG Media Operations on Twitter at [twitter.com/UCGmedia](https://twitter.com/UCGmedia)

-- Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services

## **Celebration By The Bay Teen Prom**

The San Francisco Bay Area congregation will be hosting the Southwest Regional Teen Prom on March 10, 2018 at the Embassy Suites in Walnut Creek, California. Sabbath services will be held at the hotel at 2:30 p.m., followed at sunset by a teen dinner and dance. The cost is \$40.00 and is payable online or by mail by February 23, 2018. Please visit the website at [www.swrteenprom.org](http://www.swrteenprom.org) to register as well as obtain housing and other pertinent information.

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