



# United Church of God

*an International Association*

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

Issue 313

February 15, 2018

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

Dear fellow servants of God,

This past week we held three days of Leadership and Ministerial conferences in Portland, Oregon.



Participants at the Northwest Region Ministerial Conference.

Regional pastor Steve Nutzman commented: "I heard a lot of very positive feedback from ministers and wives about how practical the presentations were at the conference. The material that was presented covered very specific and down-to-earth details about how to better serve God's elect as elders and wives. This conference was just what we needed. It was a home run in terms of the content and fellowship."

Elder Rob Slocum added: "First let us say we very much appreciated both the content and the way that it was presented. We are encouraged by the direction of the church, but even more by the spirit of those in positions to direct the church. We are all human and inherently flawed, and Tina and I understand the struggles we all experience in our journey to become like our Elder Brother--it is a tall task."

I could not agree more with these assessments and want to first thank our Ministerial Education Team that includes Chris Rowland, Darris McNeely and Steve Myers for making these conferences what they were.

We presented a mix of lectures, round table discussions, question and answer sessions along with lots of interactivity that kept the meetings vibrant. Some presentations were geared for helping us to do our jobs more competently while others were intended for an elder's personal improvement as an overseer.

What did we talk about?

Tim Pebworth, pastor of Oakland and Petaluma, California, as well as senior pastor of French-speaking areas of the world, spoke about pastoring young adults and building relationships. In each of our conferences we ask a member of the Young Adults Leadership Initiative task force to give this presentation.

Darris McNeely spoke about "A Church Led by the Holy Spirit" in which he focused on the work of the first century church as it spread out into the world from Jerusalem. He also gave a concluding lecture entitled "Be an Elder at the Gate."



Steve Nutzman presenting "A Good Shepherd Should..."

We thanked all our elders for the work they do in their current roles. Some are active pastors of congregations, while other elders assist them. Some are pastors emeritus who, while retired from active employment, are fulfilling an important function in mentoring and volunteer service. We also recognized our three widow attendees: Sandy Cafourek, Betty Ashland and LeeAnn Luker. We gave special mention to our spouses for their support of our ministry and all its trials.



Steve Myers leads a group discussion about "Renovation Realities" and strategies for ministers to overcome stress.

By video, Scott Hoefker gave a presentation "Resilience, Change and Focus in a Stressful World" which was followed by Steve Myers offering solutions to the daily challenges in a minister's life. Steve also gave an excellent exposition of the relationships of the various covenants and which commands are to be observed and which are not in "The Hassle with Tassels."

I moderated a presentation about the ministerial code of ethics and its development. We then had a round table discussion centering on three questions:

1. How do you define "divisive" behavior that undermines the United Church of God? Please give us examples or a list of such.
2. You come to a different understanding about a Fundamental Belief, teaching or practice of the United Church of God. What is your responsibility and what should you do?
3. I see a brother in the ministry speaking against his fellow ministers and his superiors. What should I do?

I was pleased to see a focused ministry who valued the importance of integrity, ethical conduct and doing no harm to our congregations. I wanted to emphasize this highly in this conference.

I also moderated a discussion about challenges and solutions in our ministry. When at the Latin American Conference in Santiago, Chile, last month this was a most valuable session of the conference as elders brought up their challenges and fellow elders offered solutions based on their experiences. Topics raised by the participants in the Northwest region dealt with making

disciples, modest dress, Feast of Tabernacles planning, and training along with several other topics that yielded healthy discussion.

Preceding the ministerial regional conference, we held a one-day regional leadership workshop. About 100 were in attendance for quite a lively day of meetings and discussion! It is encouraging to see so many members who have the interest and desire to do more in serving the Church.



The audience for the Leadership Workshop in Portland.

These conferences help us get to know one another better and help to strengthen bonds--some new, and some renewals of friendship going back decades. We all felt greatly enriched and I, too, will testify that it was a great set of conferences. For more photos from the conference, you can visit the link at the bottom of this eNews for the [Ministerial and Member Services Facebook page](#).

### **Vernon Hargrove**

While on this visit to Portland, Bev and I also visited with Vern Hargrove. Darris and Debbie McNeely also visited him. Vernon continues to have some ongoing health and age issues, but appears to be stabilizing and doing a bit better in recent weeks. He is living in an assisted living facility near his son, Michael. He would be encouraged to hear from the people he served during his more than fifty years as a minister. Cards and letters can be sent to: Vernon Hargrove, Princeton Village, [14370 SE Oregon Trail Dr Apt 213, Clackamas, OR 97015](#)-6293

### **Ambassador Bible College and International Students**

Michael and Karen Schuster, church members in Oregon, have been persistently working for several years on ABC's ability to admit students from overseas for a full-year's study. It has been a difficult road, especially in the current immigration climate.

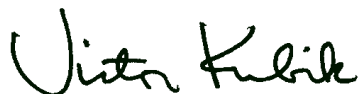
Two of our students were able to obtain a six-month B-2 visa which allows for some avocational training while in the United States. This visa can be extended to a longer period of time and we are pursuing this.

Along with the Schusters, I went to visit the attorney who is helping us with this process. We spent some very informative time with him to understand what can be done. At one time, Karen Schuster was an intern with this firm that specializes in immigration law. We hope and pray to be able to obtain a full year's visa for ABC students coming from abroad.

Bev and I are staying in the Northwest through this coming weekend and will attend with the Tacoma, Washington, congregation this Sabbath.

A lot of good things are happening in the United Church of God! Thank you for your prayers for us. We will continue to pray for all of you!

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

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

### **Death of Steve Kirk, Jr.**




A long-time elder and servant of God's people died Monday evening at the age of 97. Steve Kirk was respected and greatly loved here in Oklahoma throughout his 59 years since being baptized. For the past several years he suffered with dementia and was unable to attend services. He was married to his wife, Mavis (age 93), for 78 years. She is a shut-in and is greatly adored by the Oklahoma City congregation.

Services for Mr. Kirk will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, February 16. The full obituary is available here: <http://www.criswellfh.com/obituary/steve-kirk-jr>

-- Ed Dowd, pastor

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