



United Church of God

an International Association

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

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Personal From the President...

Dear fellow servants of God,

As we start this new month of August, we are excited to report that the Video Recording Studio is almost complete and on schedule with the construction phase of this project. The electrical work was finalized earlier this week and the remaining inspections are planned for the end of this week.



Yesterday we put up a new sign to the Home Office as part of the construction project.

If all of our inspections go well, we should receive our Certificate of Occupancy and we can then take possession of the new space. At that time, we will begin to move some of our existing TV studio equipment over to the new studio.

We have finalized our negotiations with a set building company and I signed the contract today for its construction. The cost came in \$11,000 under the initial estimate. The on-camera set will be built off-site and should be ready to install at the end of September or in October.

Haiti

We are very encouraged by the report from Chuck Smith, Senior Pastor of the Caribbean region, about our church in Haiti. Please read his report in this issue.

Ambassador Bible College

ABC begins in a few weeks with a picnic for incoming students on August 26, orientation the next day and classes start August 28. This will be a larger class than the past two years with more international students. We have four from Australia, one from India, one from Ukraine along with others. I have been in meetings with our immigration attorney helping to arrange proper visas for international students. I heartily thank Kathy de Campos along with Michael and Karen Schuster who have pursued this task so diligently.

David Fenney

Yesterday I spoke with David Fenney, chief executive officer of the UCG-BI Charity and pastor of Preston, Sheffield, Stirling and Ballymena congregations in the United Kingdom. He experienced a heart attack over the weekend of July 7. He was treated by angioplasty for a constriction in a small artery and after three days in the hospital returned home, where he is recovering well. He feels his normal self but must take things easy. He will undergo follow-up tests for his recovery in coming weeks. David would like to thank all those who have sent cards and good wishes and who have been praying for him. Youth Camp with 25 campers and 15 staff is in progress this week and David and Barbara Fenney have been a big part of it. David is home resting this year.

A Mighty Promise: We can *never* be separated

I am deeply grieved as I watch the worldwide refugee crisis, human smuggling, separation of children from parents. My parents were refugees for four years and slave laborers in Germany three years before that. I came over as a two-year old and have lived in a survivor family that was traumatized by that experience.

As I see others helplessly suffer, this represents the heart-rending definitive summation of a world going mad, of the pressing need for God's Kingdom to come. The images come in different forms and in different places. It can be the image of fearful faces gaping helplessly as their overloaded and unseaworthy vessel dangerously bobs up and down, unsteadily headed to who knows where. It can be the heart-breaking image of a face-down lifeless body of a three-year-old boy, washed up on a lonely Turkish shore after being separated from his anguished Syrian refugee parents when their inflatable dinghy capsized. It can be accounts of huddled families tramping through hot stinking mud on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, involuntarily cast from their homes and desperately seeking to flee violence, rape and murder. And, of course, there is the current politically polarized stories of Mexican families torn apart from their parents as they illegally try to cross the American border in search of a better life.

These images sear my mind. This is going on even while you're reading this-- and it's going on in a thousand different places.

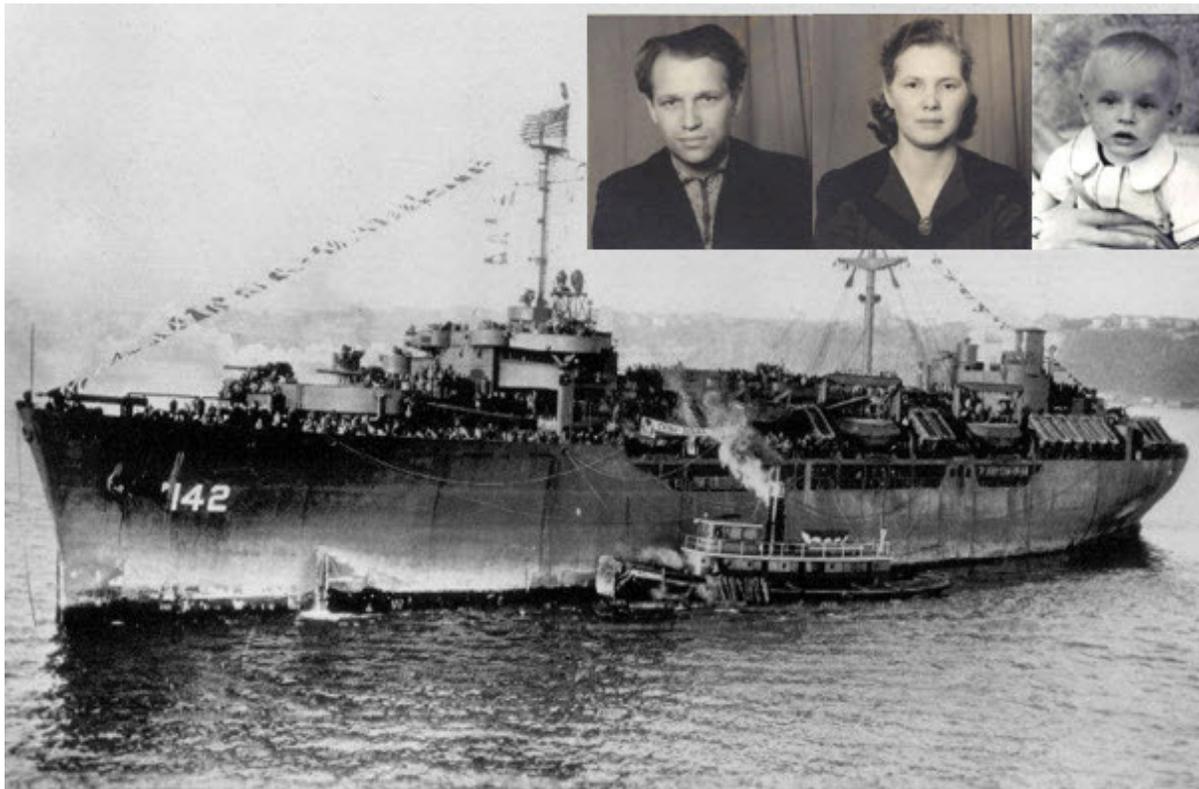
Refugees fleeing mindless war and families desperately seeking shelter and opportunity--these stories pierce my heart. It might seem easy to turn away, but I cannot.

This is not a new story. The mind-numbing tragedies of refugees crisscross thousands of years of history. Today, millions of words have been written and countless stories told about immigration and refugees in contemporary times that have no human solution.

So, why should that matter to us?

Because this powerfully reminds me that we live in times where life is fragile. As millions know today, the stability of a peaceful life can vanish in a heartbeat. In America, where a standard of living exists that is but fantasy or a wild hope for much of the rest of the world, the challenges faced by refugees can be difficult to understand. We who live in prosperous countries have little context of what refugees struggle against. When we daily pray as disciples of Christ "Your Kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10), I suspect that some are motivated to pray that prayer a little more fervently than others.

As I mentioned, I come from a family of refugees. As an infant, I was born in and lived my first two years of life in a United Nations refugee camp following the close of World War II.



Above is the troop carrier USS General C.H. Muir that brought us from Bremerhaven, Germany, to Ellis Island, New York, in July 1949. Photos of Igor and Nina Kubik along with son Victor in Germany.

I've told parts of this story before in the pages of *Beyond Today* and in various sermons and other forums. But the key bit is this: but for a few fortunate turns, I would likely not be writing this in English today. In fact, I probably would never have known life in the United States.

Here's a quick review of my background and why it's relevant: during the war, my parents were dislocated from their Ukrainian homeland and forced by the Nazis to be laborers in German wartime factories. When the war ended, a compulsory trip back to an uncertain future in the Soviet Union loomed large. As yet unmarried, my then-future parents desperately came up with a plan of escape. Together with another couple, they fled from the Russian detention site where they had been assigned. Miraculously, they found shelter in a Hannover refugee camp operated by Western Allies. There they married and two years later, I came along.

But their trial was not over. For four long years, they applied and waited, applied and waited. They sought asylum in Canada, Australia, the United States and even various countries in South America. Nothing opened up.

After nearly half a decade in a refugee camp, it looked like they were going to be forced to return back to Soviet-controlled Ukraine. It was not a pleasant option.

Then, literally at the last hour, what can only be described as a miracle occurred. A sponsor from the United States appeared. Our lives were profoundly changed beyond measure. After a challenging trip from war-torn Germany and a problematic and eventful passage through Ellis Island in New York, we settled in Minnesota as grateful immigrants and began to build anew. We were all fervently thankful and appreciative that we had been given a second chance. We knew God had been miraculously involved, and we knew that God was present in our lives. It was, and remains, profoundly humbling.

So, when I see or read news of refugees who were not nearly so fortunate as I was, it gives me pause. It reminds me of three spiritual lessons that you may find of value.

First, for me with my experience, the Apostle Peter totally summed it up when he referred to disciples of Christ as "temporary residents and foreigners" (1 Peter 2:11, New Living Translation) living on earth. I have been a naturalized American citizen since the second grade of elementary school. But I have been blessed to understand that my true citizenship, my eternal nationality, is being held in store for me in heaven until the return of Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20). That citizenship is as real as anything I know.

Second, as both a citizen of the coming Kingdom of God and a present child of the Most High God (1 John 3:3), I am called to a changed life. Paul directs us to "set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth" (Colossians 3:2). As spiritual refugees awaiting a better Kingdom, Paul further instructs us: "do *not* be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

Third, even though we might be spiritual refugees on this planet, we can *never* be torn or involuntarily separated from our spiritual Father or our Elder Brother Jesus Christ! The pain and anguish suffered by those separated as refugees will never come upon us. On the eve of His death, Jesus declared to His disciples: "I will *not* abandon you as orphans--I will come to you" (John 14:18, NLT). God gave Joshua a mighty promise that we can claim: "I will *not* fail you or abandon you" (Joshua 1:5, NLT). And finally, I invite you to read these words from Romans slowly and ponder their magnificent meaning for you and me: "*nothing* can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow...*nothing in all creation* will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39, NLT).

I'm thankful that I was never separated from my physical parents as a child. I'm even more thankful that I'll never be separated from my spiritual Father in Heaven.

What an incredible promise! What an incredible future! May God's Kingdom come soon!

In Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victor Kubik". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Victor" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Kubik".

Victor Kubik

Update on the Church in Haiti

During the week of June 4, deacon Joseph Jean shipped both his truck and a donated Church van to Haiti, each loaded down with donated goods, including many items for conducting Church services (50 chairs, 4 tables, a sound system, piano, etc.). The Jeans followed the next week, arriving in Haiti on June 12. They spent the next two weeks getting settled and getting their home prepared to serve as a meeting hall for Sabbath services.



Joseph Jean and family.

The Jeans live in the town of Mirebalais, about one hour from the capital of Port au Prince.

On the Sabbath of June 30, the first UCG Haiti service was held. The Jeans hosted a group of 17 in their home. The next Sabbath, July 7, 35 people attended. Their shipments did not arrive until the following week, so by the Sabbath of July 14, they had all the necessary items for conducting services. On that Sabbath, the attendance was 61. On July 21, the attendance had increased to 70.

Mrs. Jean spends Fridays preparing rice and beans to feed all the attendees on the Sabbath, so everyone can go home with a full stomach. The Jeans took a water purifier with them, so they can supply attendees with safe drinking water (something that is scarce in the countryside where the Jeans reside) to send home with them.

Mr. Jean has also been conducting weekly Bible Studies in the neighboring towns and villages. His main focus in life is to do God's work in his home country of Haiti, and he devotes most of his energy to this end.

The native tongue in Haiti is Creole, which is closely related to French. We have a volunteer in Alabama who speaks Creole and who has agreed to translate literature for us. She is almost finished translating the booklet "The Road to Eternal Life." In the meantime, Mr. Jean is requesting more literature in French, as most Haitians can read it fairly well.

We thank Tim Pebworth for his support. He sent all his remaining French hymnals to be shipped to Haiti. Others donated funds that are being used to purchase Creole Bibles, items needed to conduct Sabbath services, and to help with shipping costs. Still others donated clothing, shoes, medical supplies, etc. We humbly thank the many, many brethren from across the U.S. who have given so generously. May God bless each of you, and may He continue to bless our efforts in Haiti.

I had planned to visit Haiti in early August, but due to instability in the Haitian government right now, it may be necessary to postpone my trip.

-- Chuck Smith

Boundary Waters Adventure Scouting Trip



Last week, a group of pastors and home office employees, along with two of their wives, conducted a four-day canoe trip in the Boundary Waters of Northern Minnesota. This was part of the planning process for creating a Young Adult program that will complement the existing Challenger Program.



Led by Kevin Kenady, the group included Dan and Kim Preston, Lewis and Lena VanAusdle, Aaron Booth, Jay Ledbetter and Frank Dunkle. The trip was exhausting and exhilarating--bringing back memories of similar trips at SEP, decades ago.



Experiencing hard work, discomfort and high achievement together creates bonds of friendship and understanding among the participants. That alone is good, but it will also provide an excellent venue for teaching and discussing spiritual principles with young adults who participate in the program in the future.

Festival Children's Choir Music Now Available

The Festival Children's Choir music for U.S. and Canadian sites is now ready to be downloaded by pastors and individuals. The Children's Choir guidelines as well as practice recordings of the selections are available. Children's Choir directors for sites outside the U.S. and Canada are also welcome to use this music, if they desire.

You can listen and/or download the selections from the Feast web page at: <https://www.ucg.org/childrens-choir-music>

Ministerial Online Training Classes

The Online training classes for our ministry continue now, as we begin our seventh year.

The new Online school year of 2018-2019 begins again on August 25. This is a golden opportunity for our ministry to continue in our Online Bible classes. This year three classes will be offered that will complete our first tour of the entire Bible: Wisdom Literature (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon) with Randy Urwiller instructing, Post-Exilic Literature with Frank Dunkle instructing, and Former Prophets with Steve Myers instructing. Classes will begin on Tuesday, August 7, at 10 a.m. Eastern time. If you have not been in the classes before, all ministers are welcome to join the classes, but please contact Ken Graham so he can get you registered and signed up for the classes as soon as possible.

-- Ken Graham

Report from Northwest Preteen Camp



This year we hosted our largest group yet at Northwest Preteen Camp with 96 campers and 77 staff, breaking last year's record attendance. Our theme this year was "God's Commandments" focusing on not only the 10 Commandments, but on the Great Commandments as well.



The campers really enjoyed making 10 Commandment plaques in arts and crafts. The material to make these was mixed right on site and campers had to work fast to get the molds ready and put reinforcing mesh into the mold and then insert a hanging hook into the back before the mix hardened. The next day they were able to paint them before taking them home to hang. Also in arts and crafts, they created 400 cards to be send to area shut-ins for the Feast. Learning how the 10

Commandments fit into the Great Commandments and how to apply them in our lives was a constant theme in each of the activities.

Temperatures at camp this year were warm, but not too hot, hovering in the upper 80s and mid-90s. Mornings were cool and started with Christian Living where campers learned targeted lessons under the beautiful canopy of the northwest forest against a backdrop of Mount Hood. As the day heated up, campers found relief with a number of water-related activities like swimming, river float and outside sports where water cannons and sprinklers made frequent appearances.

Archery is a favorite for so many, and this year campers got to shoot at a variety of targets designed to challenge and inspire new skills and excitement. Winners of the best shot competition were awarded with handmade bows by craftsman Mike Hunicke with a third bow awarded this year based primarily on attitude and character.



In dance class, some fun activities were added to the many dances they learned. Older campers learned to swing dance and the oldest dorms had a dance one night after campfire where they learned the art of asking one another to dance and of escorting their partner out to the floor and back again. They were nervous at first, but by the end of the activity were disappointed that it ended so soon!

Older dorms also had the additional activity of a challenge course, which taught them about the "zone" and what it is like to go to teen camp and participate at a different level. Concepts of independent thinking were introduced into each of the elements as they had to learn to work together and pass each level.

Another hit was the addition of indoor sports this year with activities like crab soccer with an oversized ball, kickball, and this life-sized Hungry Hippos game. The end of the day found us at campfire where we recapped the day, watched hilarious skits, heard clever chants, and sang songs. The last day of camp had a camp-wide capture the flag game before the final awards ceremony. Each year activity leaders present awards highlighting achievements like learning to swim, achieving various goals and showing wonderful attitudes. The final award presented is one that is decided on by each dorm. There were 11 dorms this year and each one chose the camper that best displayed leadership through their actions. This year, the award was named after our former director, John Cafourek, who gave so many years to this program and offered the type of leadership that we can all aspire to follow. Our goal is for campers to leave with the word of God in their hearts and minds reinforcing that there is a better way to live than this world has discovered. That we can support each other and inspire one another to grow and become faithful members of God's family.

-- Jeff Richards, Camp Director

Report from Camp Buckeye



Pre-teen Camp Buckeye, located in North Central Ohio, ended on Wednesday, August 1. This year we had 80 campers and 70 staff members, and the daily temperatures were very enjoyable, with the daytime highs in the mid-70s and evening lows in the 60s. Storms came through on Tuesday morning and some of

the outdoor classes had to be cut short because of thunder, but weather turned favorable again for the remainder of camp.



We had all of our usual daily activities of Arts & Crafts, Canoeing, Court Games, Fishing, Field Games, Indoor Games, Team Building and Watersports. Archery was back on the schedule again, with all new equipment. In addition, we received a generous donation from *Bass Pro Shops*, so every camper was given a brand new fishing rod, reel and starter tackle box at the conclusion of camp. Our evening Bible skits were all very entertaining and we were blessed once again to have Mr. Mark Graham come on Monday night to lead a very enjoyable sing-along at campfire.



Each morning we had Christian Living classes with themes centered on Creation Week, Choosing the Right Path, and God is Not a Respector of Persons.

We're very grateful to God for blessing us with a wonderful, safe camp and an amazing group of volunteer staff that worked very hard to help our children have an enjoyable camp experience.

-- Len Martin, Camp Director

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