



United Church of God

an International Association

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

Issue 342

September 13, 2018

Personal From the President...

Dear fellow servants of God,

This is the last edition of the *eNews* until after the Feast of Tabernacles. All of us at the home office wish you a wonderful Festival season. People are beginning to leave for various sites around the world. Richard and Emma Kennebeck from the home office left this morning for Germany.

Visit to Sri Lanka and India

After the Feast of Tabernacles, Bev and I are traveling with David and Jolinda Schreiber to Sri Lanka and India. In Colombo, capital of Sri Lanka, we have a lively congregation and we look forward to visiting with them on the Sabbath of October 6. From there, we will travel to India to the state of Andhra Pradesh, where there are interestingly many pockets of "Sabbath keepers." Most came in contact with us through the *Beyond Today* magazine and our Beyond Today program on the Internet.

While in that state, we plan to hold Kingdom of God seminars in three cities: Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam and Annapali. We have scattered brethren in the country and some will meet with us in the cities where we will hold the seminars.

Next, we will travel to the far eastern reaches of India to the state of Mizoram to visit a group called "United Church of God Mizoram." They have adopted the UCGIA Fundamental Beliefs, are keeping the seventh-day Sabbath, all of God's Feasts and desire to preach the gospel in their state. They contacted us and requested a more formal relationship with United Church of God. In January of this year, the Council of Elders approved strong support for a relationship whereby UCGIA can be of aid in their work of preaching the gospel through distribution of the UCGIA's English version booklets as well as (translated) publications of UCGIA literature in India and in extending our help in serving their congregations in such other ways as is possible.

They have built a new church building in Kolasib--which was fully funded through the dedicated support of their own brethren.

Lastly we will travel to Delhi, the capital of the country of India. Before our departure home, we will meet with George and Shobha Samuel who both faithfully serve our members in the church congregation in Agra, India. George Samuel is hoping to come to Ambassador Bible College in January if his U.S. visa is approved. We look forward to meeting George and Shobha before we depart on Tuesday, October 16, for Cincinnati.

Florence

Craig Scott, pastor in Raleigh, North Carolina, passed along this summary of the situation with Hurricane Florence, which is about to reach the shores of North Carolina and Virginia later today and Friday:

"Areas of North Carolina close to the coast have been told to evacuate to avoid storm surge and flooding. This affects many of the members who attend in Jacksonville. One family from the North Myrtle Beach area has evacuated and is staying with members in Raleigh.

"Members in the Raleigh and Greensboro congregations have volunteered to make their homes available to any church members and family who need a place to stay while we all ride out the storm.

"Most members along the coast have elected to stay home and wait out the storm. The storm is expected to hit the northern coast of South Carolina near Myrtle Beach.

"The Raleigh area may experience high winds, fallen trees, power outages and some flooding along creek and river beds. Currently, Florence has been downgraded to a category two storm."

Dan Preston, pastor in Charlotte, North Carolina, writes:

"With the impact of Hurricane Florence imminent, the brethren in the Carolinas urgently request your prayers. Perhaps the greatest concern is that since it now appears the storm will stall as it reaches land, there will likely be major flooding. While the total amount of rain predicted in Charlotte varies from 6 to 12 inches depending on how the storm tracks, it is almost certain that some parts of the region will be hit with upward of 3 feet of rain. The rain, along with the storm surge, will likely cause devastating damage in large parts of both states. This, coupled with potential widespread power outages, presents the opportunity for Hurricane Florence to cause as much or more damage than Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

"Both North and South Carolina have been placed in a state of emergency with many counties under mandatory evacuations along the coast. An even greater

number of counties have already begun closing schools and government agencies. Most universities have cancelled classes through the weekend and even prisons are relocating prisoners farther inland. Several roads, including Interstate 26 from Charleston to Columbia have been set up for 'contraflow,' where normally South or East bound lanes are changed to be North and West bound in order to aid those forced to evacuate.

"Due to the impacts on both weather and traffic conditions, Sabbath services for September 15th have been cancelled for Charlotte and Hickory, NC, as well as Columbia, SC. Please join your brethren here in praying for not only safety of people and property, but that the effects of hurricane Florence will have subsided enough that Atonement services can continue as planned next week. For those planning on stopping in Charlotte or Columbia for Sabbath services on September 22, we do anticipate services will be held as scheduled, but please check those congregational websites for updates."

Trumpets in Windsor



Feast of Trumpets in Windsor, Ontario

Beverly and I kept the Feast of Trumpets in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. We thoroughly appreciated the time on this Holy Day with our Canadian brethren. A number of members came over from Detroit, Michigan. After the sermon, we had a brief break and then had a discussion, question and answer session. Then we all went to the home of the Joseph and Mary Brdar, who hosted a potluck meal where we spent several hours in enjoyable fellowship.



Dinner after services at the home of Joseph and Mary Brdar.

I am thankful to God for our brethren who are growing in grace and knowledge and showing a life of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

I thank our God daily for our brethren, as well as our ministers who truly do care deeply for our people. We just conducted a Pastoral Development Program online class Tuesday night about the importance of constant care, oversight and concern for God's people as pastors, based on the statement that Paul made in 2 Corinthians about his personal tribulations and his commitment to caring for the churches: "Beside those things that are without, that which come upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:28, KJV).

Feast press release performing well

Since its online release on September 6, the press release prepared and distributed by the church has appeared in nearly 150 online editions of major newspapers, blogs and other media sources in the United States, Europe and Asia (including the *Cincinnati Business Courier* -- <https://www.bizjournals.com/cincinnati/prnewswire/press-releases/Ohio/2018/09/06/MN98853>). In addition to the direct media placements, the release has been downloaded individually nearly 100 times and has appeared on Twitter.

The release is available on a permalink (<http://www.ireachcontent.com/news-releases/14000-gather-to-celebrate-lifes-dynamic-spiritual-focus-church-follows-example-of-first-century-disciples-692613471.html>), which will remain after the Feast with its inbound links and is SEO optimized for search engines. If members are interested, the release can also be re-tweeted, or placed on Facebook or other social media by using this shortened link (to the version on the Church's website): <http://bit.ly/2CTLW89>

The headline from the release, as well as link ucg.org/feast, will be appear before opening night of the Feast of Tabernacles on the eight-story-high Reuters panel in New York City's Times Square.

Politics, Religion and the Kingdom of God

In polite conversation in social settings, there exist two subjects that one does not generally bring up: religion and politics. In the United States, even church and state are separated from one another.

In doing the Work of God, the Church focuses on the promotion of our faith. We speak passionately at length about God, Jesus Christ, the Bible, salvation, Christian ethics and the like. We also speak of prophetic events foretelling the future of world governments.

An outsider would probably be surprised to learn that much of the Bible--particularly prophecy--reflects in detail key issues that outsiders would label "politics." God declares specific views about how leaders of nations should act and serve. The Almighty holds a very dim view of unrighteous leaders and national disobedience to His laws and precepts. God is clear about where unrighteousness as a nation will lead. Much of Bible prophecy simply reflects the collective consequences of disobeying God's law.

To someone who doesn't know us, our conversations in the Church can appear to be a mix of religion and politics. Here's why.

When Christ's disciples asked how to pray, Jesus responded directly with a succinct and prioritized list of points. Jesus specifically instructed to begin with praise, gratitude and adoration of God, as He stated: "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed [holy and set apart] be Your name" (Matthew 6:9). He immediately followed up with the next point: "Your kingdom come." Kingdom? That's typically a political entity. What does that mean? God's Kingdom will bring a new government with the religious backing of God--like a state-church solution.

Thankfully, we in the Church understand this priority and its meaning for us. We're about to celebrate that matchless truth with our observance of the Feast of Tabernacles!

Some 55 years ago, I first gained an understanding of the Kingdom of God. Many of you probably have a similar experience. This precious understanding came to me when I was a teenager. Ironically, an astonishing wealth of invaluable information came from an inexpensive Bible that my dad's first employer gave him.

This marvelous understanding ultimately changed my life and my outlook towards the world. It gave me purpose in life and hope as nothing ever had. I consider the knowledge and implications of the Kingdom of God to be one of the greatest Truths that I've learned.

To set the stage for what we're about to celebrate, allow me to relate some key truths about the Kingdom, truth that I first learned half a century ago but still find fresh, thrilling, and full of personal meaning:

The Kingdom of God is still in the future. Praying "Your Kingdom come" clearly indicates that God's Kingdom is not here yet. The globe-encircling Kingdom is one that we look forward to, one that fills us with marvelous hope.

Jesus was consumed with the Kingdom message. "Christ" is a Greek word that means "Anointed One" or "Messiah." Jesus, as the prophesied Messiah, powerfully began His ministry with this declaration: "Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel'" (Mark 1:14-15). *The gospel--the "good news"--itself directly focuses on the Kingdom of God and everything it means for humanity.* For three and half years Jesus walked, talked and proclaimed the Kingdom of God.

The Old Testament is saturated with the Kingdom. The Scriptures available at the time--what we know today as the Old Testament--powerfully spoke of this Kingdom and its attributes, including the establishment of a new, divinely-controlled political system. Note this reference in Isaiah: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the *government* will be upon His shoulder., Of the increase of His *government* and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over *His kingdom*, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, *even forever*" (Isaiah 9:6-7, emphasis added throughout).

Daniel positively and forcefully outlined a coming world government from God. A divine political system will annihilate and supplant a string of oppressive, corrupt and destructive world governmental systems. Here's but a taste: "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall *never be destroyed*; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44).

In a direct prophecy of Jesus the Messiah, Daniel recorded: "Then to Him [Jesus] was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. *His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away*" (Daniel 7:13-14).

Christ's ministry was devoted to the Kingdom. Skillfully using the tools of the time, Jesus taught through parables and other means about the Kingdom of God: "Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:1).

Jesus left no doubt about His purpose as the Leader of a future divine government. At the end of His life, Jesus Christ unequivocally proclaimed that He was a king. Jesus as King will be dramatically different. He will be a paragon of love, goodness and righteousness. Before the secular Roman leader Pilate, Jesus declared:

"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here" (John 8:36). Puzzled, Pilate asked: "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and *for this cause* I have come into the world" (John 18:36-37).

We in the Church know that in His Second Coming, Jesus will triumphantly fulfill the prophecies of Daniel, Isaiah and many others as well as His announcement to Pontius Pilate about Who He was.

The Bible presents a future extraordinary harmony between religion and politics. The incredible finale, when Church and State will merge together, vividly appears in the book of Revelation: "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns... And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:11-16).

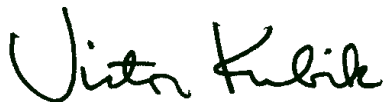
And, finally, the announcement comes that we're all fervently waiting for: "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and *He shall reign forever and ever*" (Revelation 11:15)!

At the end of this human age, Jesus Christ as High Priest and King of Kings indeed does bring politics and religion together for survival and good. The few passages I have mentioned are but a tip of the iceberg.

Occasionally I'm asked about my political views. My answer reflects the understanding behind Christ's statement, "Your Kingdom Come." From my perspective, there exists no better solution. Only a political solution from God Himself will solve the dilemmas of mankind and provide a permanent system to sustain our lives for all eternity.

I love the Feast of Tabernacles because I can speak at length about the Kingdom of God. It is my favorite subject, whether in conversation or in sermons. I never get tired of it and I hope that all of us can say the same! May Thy Kingdom come!

In Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Victor Kubik". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Victor" and last name "Kubik" clearly distinguishable.

Victor Kubik

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Recent Ordinations



Filius and Chosiwe Jere

On September 1, 2018, Filius Jere was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Chosiwe, serve in the Chipata, Zambia, congregation.



Victor Hou

On September 8, 2018, Victor Hou was ordained into the ministry. He serves in the San Diego, California, congregation.



Steven and Danielle Britt

On September 10, 2018, Steven Britt was ordained into the ministry. He serves as an assistant pastor for the congregations in Cincinnati, Ohio, with his wife, Danielle.



Joshua and Lizzy Creech

On September 10, 2018, Joshua Creech was ordained into the ministry. He serves as an assistant pastor for the congregations in Cincinnati, Ohio, with his wife, Lizzy.

Travel Blog

Scott and Gayle Hoefker will share their travel blog for the 2018 Feast of Tabernacles in Cartagena, Colombia beginning this coming Monday at the following link: http://v2.travelark.org/travel-blog/gayle_hoefker/26

#ucgfot Share Your Feast of Tabernacles Experiences

Help us share the Feast experience with everyone! Use #ucgfot on Twitter and Instagram and we'll share them on the UCG Feast website.

Are you getting excited about the Feast? Share the excitement with others before, during and even after the Feast. Post those memories to Twitter and Instagram and use the hashtag #ucgfot in your post.

Check out our Feast of Tabernacles social wall to view #ucgfot posts from Twitter and Instagram. Go to <https://walls.io/vMHcFNb68> While you are there, scroll down the wall and checkout memories from past Feast of Tabernacles.

Have a great Feast!

-- Aaron Booth, Internet Managing Editor

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