



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 do the Work of God, we are confronted with important questions and considerations about our jobs. Most obviously, we consider **WHAT** we do. That could be writing an article, editing a video, giving a sermon, whatever. But, next looms the question **HOW** do we do it? What is our strategy and method? The third question is the one that is not so obvious. It is **WHY** do we do what we do? The answer to this question is most important because it shows the reason for our existence as a Church. The answer determines our effectiveness and gives us the energy to continue with the challenges we face and helps us persevere in them. They also help us recognize the many great resources we have (including our employees and members) as we move forward.

The Church's Mission and Vision statements reveal the answers to the **HOW** and the **WHY**. The **WHY** is answered by the Vision statement which reads:

"A Church led by God's Holy Spirit, joined and knit together by what every member supplies, with all doing their share and growing in love to fulfill God's great purpose for humanity to bring many children to glory (Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 2:10)."

The **WHY** we do what we do is to "*fulfill God's great purpose for humanity to bring many children to glory.*"

The Church's Mission statement explains the **HOW** we do the Work:

"The mission of the Church of God is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples."

In the Church's 2018-2019 Strategic Plan, an entirely new section called *Organizational Stewardship* was approved by the General Conference of Elders. In that section, five different outcomes are listed, one of which is:

"Employees receive timely communication from the management team and are encouraged to share their ideas and feedback."

On Monday, we had an invigorating Focus Meeting at the home office where employees were gathered in small groups to contemplate and discuss our church's Vision Statement which encapsulates "**WHY**" our church exists.

This rather brief statement contains some rather weighty things to consider. How are we led by God's Holy Spirit? Are we "joined and knit together" and if not, are there things we can do to change that? Do we truly consider "what every member supplies" and are we all "doing our share and growing in love"? For certainly our Father's "great purpose for humanity is to bring many children to glory."

The goal of the exercise was to take time to really focus us on "why" we come to work each day and consider ways we can make improvements to our work culture and our effectiveness in fulfilling God's work.

Several themes started to come out during our discussions. Being responsive to being led by God's Holy Spirit means being grounded in God's Word, exercising humility and putting pride aside. To remain "joined and knit together" requires us to truly listen to each other, to avoid being judgmental and to rebuild trust. We need to continue improvements to how we communicate, what we communicate and with whom we communicate in an effort to improve our effectiveness. Showing appreciation and encouragement for what others contribute goes a long way toward building warm and loving relationships. Our message and the work we do needs to reflect God's desire to bring "many children to glory."

Throughout the next few months we will continue to conduct a series of extended Focus Meetings where we will focus more on both the Vision and Mission of the Church.

You might be interested in the questions that we posed in the small group discussions in our extended meeting on Monday that we called *Unpacking the "Why"*:

- How do we put our opinions aside and yield to the Spirit of God?
- What impedes us from being "joined and knit together?" Are there things that we can do now to change that?
- Do you feel valued for what you personally "supply?" Are you given opportunities to contribute the skills you have to offer?
- What is currently in place that helps you work most effectively? Is there anything that could be improved upon or added?
- Are we growing in love as a home office staff, within our church, and within our community at large? What specific things can you point to? What barriers do we face?
- Are there things we do that are inconsistent with our Vision statement?
- Is the home office team conveying the vision of the Church to all our members effectively and does the message we send encourage and enable them to fulfill it?
- Are we conveying God's vision for humanity in a loving, genuine, and compelling way?
- Do we have a culture that is welcoming and loving to new believers?
- How do we as individuals fulfill the vision of the Church?

The meetings were most energizing and all seemed to be hopeful of improvements we can all make in fulfilling our vision and mission.

Podcast this week

Steve Britt and I discuss the timely subject of abortion in light of the annual "March for Life" in Washington D.C. on January 22nd. According to the Center for Disease Control, 600,000 abortions are performed in the U.S. every year with 40-50 million around the world. Also, shocking, is the signing into law by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo a measure that allows late-term abortion--even up to the date of delivery.

***Beyond Today* Episode From New Studio to Air**

This coming Sunday, February 3, we launch our new *Beyond Today* studio programs nationwide on WGN America with Gary Petty's program, "Are We Living in the Time of the End?"

Festival Coordinators Conference

We will hold a two-day video conference this coming Monday and Tuesday with our Festival coordinators. We will discuss reports and summaries from last year's Feast of Tabernacles, site updates for 2019, articles, music, youth education and seminars, budgets, assistance, speaking and manpower, among other topics.

Camp Video Coming in March!

Work on the 2019 camp video is well underway. The media department hopes to make a video that showcases the fun and edifying environment that United Youth Camps provides, and to touch on the camp theme for this year: Living God's Way Today. The video will be aired in local congregations during the sermonette time in early March, and then made available online.

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

Personal From Ministerial and Member Services...

Greetings to all pastors, elders, and anyone involved in sermon message review teams:

I am finding that a great deal of my time in the first few weeks here at the home office has been taken up with inquiries regarding many sermonette/sermon messages that have been posted on our UCG website. Ministers and members have contacted me regarding issues with messages of one type or another. Since we have hundreds of messages that are posted each week, it is imperative that your local church area has a thorough and viable review team.

What is a review team? It is a team of elders, deacons, and members who are well-versed in the Bible and in our teachings in the United Church of God. The size of the

team may depend on the size of the congregation and the number of qualified people to serve on the review team in a specific church area. The pastor should be the one who ultimately signs off on posting a message, but he should have, ideally, three others who have listened to the message and are in agreement that a message is sound in doctrine and, also, in tone before it is approved to be posted on our website.

If your congregation is posting messages and is not now utilizing an effective review process with multiple reviewers, please set this up within one month from today, March 1st. Pastors can refer to policy 4.6.5 in the Pastor's Policy Manual.

Obviously, it is important that the review process be organized and that the reviewers are prepared to listen and approve messages in a very timely fashion--generally within one or two weeks of a message being given. If you have questions or concerns regarding review teams and the posting of messages, please feel free to e-mail me at mark_welch@ucg.org.

Thanks,
Mark Welch

Midwest Teen Prom Announcement

The Columbus, Ohio, congregation will once again be hosting the Midwest Teen Prom on Saturday, March 16, 2019. This annual event welcomes over 100 teens from the Midwest and states all around the country. The event includes a special Sabbath with a formal dinner and dance that evening just for teens aged 12-19. Parents and family members are welcome to attend the Senior Recognition just before the dinner. Please note, the registration deadline is March 1st, only about one month away! Registration forms and hotel information can be found at www.midwestteenprom.com.

Cookbook Pre-Ordering

You can now pre-order our Unleavened Bread Cookbook. The cost is \$12.00. We would like to clarify the process for pre-ordering:

1. Please pre-order cookbooks in your local congregations. Please sign the order form that has been provided with your name, e-mail, phone number, quantity and amount of your order; address is not necessary and the order form does not need to accompany the order.
2. Please send one check (if possible) made out to "ABC Student Fund" with the quantity of cookbooks to be sent, a representative's name and phone number and e-mail address to: ABC Unleavened Bread Cookbook, 555 TechneCenter Dr, Milford, OH 45150.
3. To ensure delivery of cookbooks to all areas before the Days of Unleavened Bread, we are asking for pre-orders to reach us by February 19.
4. Please address any questions to healthy.cookbook.2019@gmail.com

Thank you for your help and support!

-- ABC Class of 2019

Inside United Podcast



Steven Britt - Abortion and Life

Steven Britt and Victor Kubik talk about the new abortion laws in New York state and discuss the biblical perspective concerning unborn babies.

<https://www.ucg.org/members/united-news/inside-united/inside-united-podcast-106-steven-britt-abortion-and-life>

Listen to past episodes or read the transcripts:

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