



UNITED NEWS

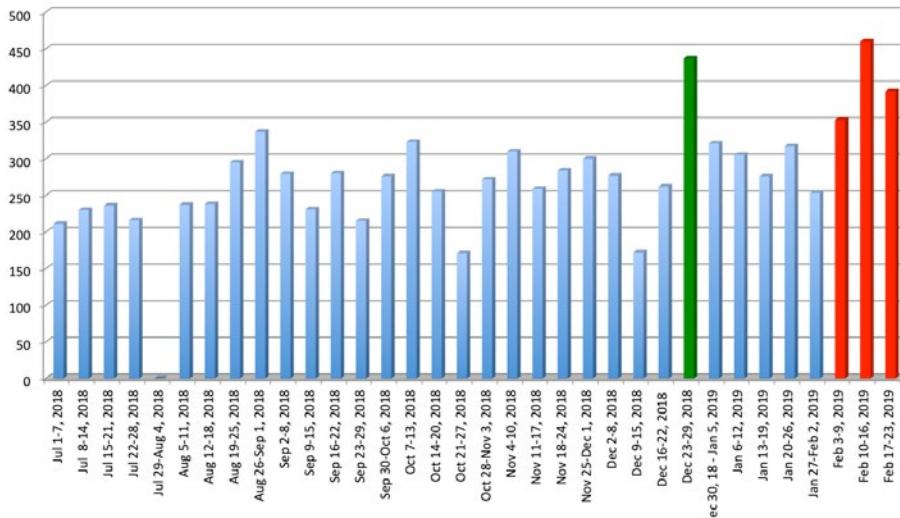
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New Video Recording Studio—Viewer Response Update



by Peter Eddington

The United Church of God is pleased to report that viewer response to the first three airings of the *Beyond Today* television program from our new video recording studio has exceeded expectations.

The first program ("Are We Living in the Time of the End?") aired Feb. 3-9, 2019. It generated the second-highest *total response* and the third-lowest *cost per response* out of the 31 previous airings of *Beyond Today* this fiscal year. (The previous high was during the Christmas week—when we almost always get our best response to programs.)

The next week's program ("The Four Horsemen of Revelation") aired Feb. 10-16. It captured the top-

most position for the entire fiscal year with the highest response and lowest *cost per response*.

In addition, response for the third program ("Are You Led by God's Spirit") took the third-highest position in terms of *viewer response* for the fiscal year. Its *cost per response* is fourth best so far.

It has been extremely rewarding and encouraging to see that the efforts to fund, design, build and equip the new video recording studio—with its enhanced program format—has immediately produced significant results.

We thank you for your tremendous support and diligent prayers. And most especially, we give abundant honor and praise to our great Eternal God for His wonderful guidance and overwhelming blessings. **UN**

Through the Eyes of a Father

by Ryan Hall

About 10 years ago, I heard my child's small voice over the phone: "Daddy, they're about to take me back for surgery and I'm scared." My heart ached to hear those words coming from that innocent little voice. My little girl lay in a hospital bed awaiting a life-saving surgery and she needed her daddy. I was over 300 miles away, helpless. Due to the circumstances, I could not be there; only her mother could be with her for this procedure.

I remember feeling as if time was standing still as I searched for the perfect words to comfort my daughter. All I wanted to do was reach out and hold her. I wanted to be her super hero and save her from the fear and pain she was facing. I wanted to lay my own body down on that hospital bed and have them cut on me in her place, but all I could do was comfort her from a distance. Instead of falling apart, I had to be strong for my daughter. I knew

it was in God's hands and our hope was in His love and mercy (Romans 8:35-39). I changed my perspective, turned to Him, and a calmness came over me.

I assured her that I loved her very much, that she was in God's loving hands, and to think of the many prayers that were being sent up on her behalf. I encouraged her to remember God had made His will perfectly clear by the miraculous events that unfolded for this surgery to take place. I reminded her of the anointing she had received and the hours we had spent discussing the procedure. Her mother and I had wanted her to be a part of the decision because it was her body.

I then asked her to close her eyes, and we said a prayer. When the prayer was finished, that soft, scared voice had changed to a brave and confident voice. Just before we

Please see page 10

Garden Grove's Women's Enrichment Weekend



Ladies at the Garden Grove's Enrichment Weekend.

"Preparing for the Winds of Change" was the theme for the 18th annual Women's Enrichment Weekend sponsored by the Garden Grove, California, congregation. It was held Jan. 25-27, at the Embassy Suites in Santa Ana, California, with 116 in attendance.

We all experience changes and varying types of breezes, gales and even hurricanes in our lives. The key is how we respond to these "winds of change." Our ladies appreciated the stories, lessons and principles that can be applied to everyday life. Two-thirds of the attendees this year were from southern California and the remaining third came from other areas in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Texas and Hawaii.

Our full weekend began with many arriving Friday, settling in to relax and meet with friends. The Sabbath began with inspiring special music selections with solos by Kourtney Kovanis, Sue Crow and Ingrid Helge, and ended with a nine-member women's ensemble. Joe Horchak, pastor of churches in Sacramento, California and

Please see page 2



INSIDE UNITED NEWS

Visit to the Philippines	2
Forward! Is Your Life a Living Letter?	3
From the Council: The Lion and the Waterbuck	3
The Good News in United News	4

The Sin of Deceit	4
Passover Check-In	4
The Ten Commandments Series	5
Phoenix Spring Holy Day Dinner and Dance ..	6
Feast of Tabernacles Meetings	6

SW Missouri Women's Weekend	7
Greensboro, NC Ladies Club	7
New Feast Site in France	7
Announcements	8
Updates from MMS	11

BY THE NUMBERS

577,554

videos watched on the *Beyond Today* Roku channel

Visit to the Philippines

by David Dobson

In January, my wife Denise and I were again privileged to travel to the Philippines for the annual National Council meeting of UCG Philippines. While there, we visited several local congregations.

After arriving in Manila on Wednesday evening, Jan. 9, we visited the Manila congregation on the Sabbath of Jan. 12. Average attendance in Manila is between 80 and 90. It is always a joy to be with the local Manila brethren who welcome everyone as family. As is common around the world among God's people, several local members have been facing serious health issues.

The National Council Meeting held on Sunday, Jan. 13, was attended by all 10 faithful elders who serve the members throughout the Philippines. This year we also invited deacon Ireneo Suaner and his wife Glory Ann from Sabah, Malaysia to join us as guests and representatives of the Sabah congregation.

Morning and afternoon meetings involved reading the minutes from the 2018 meeting, followed by updates on our finances, UYC camps and Feast sites. It was agreed that the UYC camp program this year will combine the three local congregational camps into a single national camp that will include as many campers as possible. Several will come over from Sabah to attend.

We also were updated on the recent LifeNets project at the Correctional Institute for Women in Mindanao. A second report discussed the LifeNets project that rebuilt a family's home on the island of Leyte. It was destroyed in a fire last year at the end of the Days of Unleavened Bread. The congregation's meeting hall next door was completely destroyed by the fire as well. We are still waiting for the local government to approve the rebuilding of the structure.

Another report was given on a Good Works project that has been completed in Bukidnon, Mindanao. With funds from the home office, the Kiara church hall has been repaired and made acceptable for use once again for weekly Sabbath services.

On Jan. 19, we traveled with pastor Rey Evasco and his wife Cynthia to visit the friendly and hospitable San Carlos City congregation. Located about 100 miles north of Manila, this is the only other congregation in Luzon. The congregation began several years ago as a result of a Kingdom of God seminar. The church there continues to grow, and several baptisms have taken place in the last couple years.

The traffic north to San Carlos City and then back south to Manila was horrible. The Philippines has experienced a tremendous population boom. This means more cars, motorcycles, taxis, buses, jeepneys and tricycle taxis. It took longer

than expected to make the trip to church.

On weekdays in Manila we spent time working in the Church's national office located in Makati, the business district of Manila. We always enjoy and appreciate the time we are able to spend with our two dedicated office employees: Richard Macaraeg and Stella Cambare. Denise enjoyed helping Stella prepare a mailing of literature and *Beyond Today* Magazines, many of which were sent to brand new subscribers!

On Wednesday, Jan. 23, we flew down to Mindanao, the big island in the south. Local pastor Raul Villacote, his wife Marita and their son James, picked us up at the Davao airport and drove us to the hotel where we stayed.

The next morning we traveled with the Villacotes to visit Jed and her brother Jong in their respective prisons. They are the brother and sister who have been unjustly imprisoned for over 15 years. Their story has been published in the *United News* in the past.

We were happy to see that the new water system made possible by LifeNets funds is working well and the visitor kiosks are being used on a daily basis. The prisoners and the administration appreciate the generosity of those who made it possible.

Jed and Jong looked good and were doing well in the midst of very difficult circumstances. Both mentioned several trials of faith in the last few months, but they are faithful and thankful for God's direction and deliverance. Jed and Jong always ask us to thank the brethren for their continuing prayers. Even in prison they shine as lights to those around them, and they have been given great favor. In many ways they remind us of Joseph who spent time in prison in Egypt. The day came when he was given greater favor and honor. Let us all pray for Jed and Jong to have the strength to endure their present circumstances. Let us also beseech God that His will be done with respect to their possible future release.

We visited the Davao, Mindanao congregation on the Sabbath, Jan. 26. We always enjoy spending time with the Davao congregation. We first met many of the members during the Feast 2011 and they have become our long-time cherished friends.

On Saturday night we were able to share dinner with Gem and Sarah Nagtalon who serve as elder and wife in the Davao and Santo Tomas congregations. It is always a delight to spend time with the men and women who selflessly serve among God's people.

On Friday, Feb. 1, we flew to Tacloban on the island of Leyte. We have been to Tacloban a few times since our first visit in 2014. That visit was less than a year after the devastation brought by Typhoon



Top: Kiara congregation meeting once again in their church hall.

Right: Group of young adults after services, Manila, Jan 12.



Haiyan in late 2013. A great deal of reconstruction has taken place but there still is so much more that needs to be rebuilt.

We spent Friday and Saturday nights in the Alejandro Hotel. It is an older historic hotel that was used by General Douglas MacArthur as his headquarters after the Allies landed on Leyte late in World War 2. Many photos from the World War 2 era decorate the walls of the hotel. Walking the halls looking at photos provides a trip back to a time when the American and Filipino people fought together to liberate these islands.

On Sabbath, Feb. 2, we spent a long day with Jose and Deodita Campos who serve as pastor and wife of the congregations in the central Visayas islands. Mr. Campos is very busy with his responsibilities with his work in a government office, oversight of several congregations and coordinating the Leyte Feast site. We discussed a number of ways to lighten their load.

We enjoyed visiting the enthusiastic congregation at Tubod, a small, loving group of less than 20. We had met the members at the Feast site but this was our first visit to the local church. As I have done each Sabbath, I extended greetings from Mr. Kubik and Mr. Roemer. Following services, we discussed their need for some additional concrete steps up to the church hall with a railing for the elderly and handicapped attendees.

The church is stable and solid in the Philippine Islands. If you ever have the opportunity to visit for a Feast or at any other time, you will never forget it. As we were told before our first visit, "They will steal your hearts!" **UN**

cant changes in their lives.

On Sunday afternoon, after a deli sandwich group buffet, Tina Fogelson shared "Every Day is an Adventure," which encapsulated the theme. Jean Updegraff presented closing comments. Our moderator Coleen Moriarty expertly wove the presentations together with a great deal of humor.

This year we also had a fundraiser raffle. We earmarked the proceeds toward a new Women's Enrichment Weekend in Guatemala. Our Garden Grove pastor Mario Seiglie considers Guatemala an excellent fit for a Women's Weekend to serve the ladies in the local congregations in that area. Our attendees were excited about this new opportunity and we raised \$2,105 toward funding this new venture. (About half of the funds came from raffle income and the other half from direct donations.) We are pleased to share our Women's Enrichment Weekend experiences with others who have never had the opportunity.

The ladies left the Weekend encouraged with tools to adapt to the "winds of change" in their lives.

Jean Updegraff



VICTOR KUBIK
President

The apostle Paul makes a thought-provoking statement about a letter of introduction regarding his ministry. It was common in those days for speakers to have such an endorsement or introduction when they traveled. Paul said he had a letter of reference, but not the kind people would think.

Bogus ministers appeared early on in the Church's history and were covering and shadowing the same territory as the apostles. In 2 Corinthians 2:17, Paul wrote: "You see, we are not like the many hucksters who preach for personal profit. We preach the word of God with sincerity and with Christ's authority, knowing that God is watching us" (New Living Translation).

Paul chided those who questioned his genuineness immediately in the next chapter: "Are we beginning to praise ourselves again? Are we like others, who need to bring you letters of recommendation, or who ask you to write such letters on their behalf? Surely not!" (2 Corinthians 3:1, NLT).

Paul didn't need a letter of introduc-

Is Your Life a Living Letter?



We have to take the time to write the living "letter" on our hearts. Not with pen and paper, but with the Spirit of God.

tion from others or from Corinthians. He had founded the church in Corinth. However, even as founder, the question arose about who he was, his credentials and qualifications.

Paul took this opportunity to boldly state he had the best kind of reference that anyone could want:

"The only letter of recommendation we need is you yourselves. Your lives are a letter written in our hearts; everyone can read it and recognize our good work among you.

Clearly, you are a letter from Christ showing the result of our ministry among you. This 'letter' is written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not on tablets of stone, but on human hearts" (2 Corinthians 3:2-3, NLT, emphasis added).

Brilliant! But what does all this mean?

Paul's validation as a minister was not in some kind of certification or endorsement

Please see page 9

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The Lion and the Waterbuck: Lessons of Vision, Readiness and Urgency



We must strive to keep our eye on our ultimate vision and not get distracted by what's going on around us.

a conspicuous white ring encircling their dark rump, looking like a target, called the "follow me sign." Each mother has this uniquely identifiable sign, which the cubs use to follow her.

Initially we could not see any other animals among the dry yellow/gold low-lying grass and the few sparse trees and thorn bushes. But then we started noticing a few strategically placed lionesses, and a cluster of lion pups quietly observing farther away. We must have been watching for a good 30 minutes as their strategy developed.

The lions worked as a well-coordinated, united team, focused with great intent

We need to be united and equally focused with great intent in our ultimate spiritual vision, being ready and urgent in our role to accomplish God's Work in us.

in their ultimate vision, without distractions, being urgent and ready to achieve their end goal. In the same way, we need to be united and equally focused with great intent in our ultimate spiritual vision,

Please see page 11

From The COUNCIL



by Jorge de Campos

During a safari visit to South Africa's Kruger Park, my wife and I stopped at the top of a *koppie* (a small hill). We had a prime view of the open *veld* (countryside) below. A large herd of waterbuck were leisurely drinking water from a small lagoon. It was a peaceful morning and the sun was already well up in the blue African sky.

Waterbuck are large deer, about 4 to 5 ft. tall to the shoulder. We could easily identify the male, which was a beautiful, large, robust animal (they are about 25 percent larger than the females). Its horns were well developed and widely spaced, curving gracefully back and upwards.

Waterbuck are also easily identified by

The Sin of Deceit

■ When Jesus called Nathanael as one of His original disciples, He made a remarkable statement about him. Learn what Jesus said and then ask yourself if He could say the same about you.

By John LaBissoniere

As you prepare for the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, your concentration is almost certainly on examining yourself for sin. This includes identifying it, combatting it and eliminating it from your life (1 Corinthians 11:28). Why is this so important? Because sin is the violation of God's flawless commandments. Sin is starkly opposed to everything that is good and virtuous. Indeed, sin in all its disagreeable forms, relentlessly afflicts the citizens of this turmoil-filled and confused world. Sin is pervasive. Indeed, as Scripture says, it's analogous to leaven (1 Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:7). This dark, deadly disorder permeates and contaminates everything it touches.

During Jesus Christ's three-and-a-half-year earthly ministry, He shined the bright, clear light of day on this sickness. To illustrate that it was possible to live sinlessly, He faithfully and perfectly kept God's laws throughout His 33 years of human life. Furthermore, He willingly suffered an ignominious and horrible death as a perfect sacrifice on behalf of all people (Hebrews 10:12-14). In doing so, He utterly condemned sin (Romans 8:3). This means it lost its rightful claim of eternal death over you, but only if you respond positively to His merciful calling, accept His sacrifice, repent of sin completely and are baptized as an outward sign of your unconditional commitment to Him and His way of life (Romans 8:3).

This "process of conversion" began when Jesus called His disciples at the beginning of His ministry (Luke 1:12-16). Included among His 12 original apostles was a man named Nathanael. Let's notice the remarkable statement Jesus made about him: "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is *no deceit*" (John 1:47, emphasis added throughout). Imagine Christ saying this about anyone! Of course He didn't say Nathanael was totally sinless but that deceit was fundamentally not a part of his character. Let's focus attention on the sin of deceit, which is an integral part of the Ninth Commandment against bearing false witness (Exodus 20:16).

Can Jesus Say You Are Without Deceit?

While the word "guile" is used in some Bible versions for the term deceit, the dictionary defines both expressions as "insidious, cunning in attaining a goal;

crafty or artful deceptive, duplicity." Other synonyms for deceit include dishonesty, treachery, trickery, pretense and fabrication. According to Jesus, Nathanael had no inclination toward deceiving others (Psalm 32:2), nor was he hypocritical, crafty or dishonest. He wasn't pretentious and had no desire to appear more than what he really was.

Again, knowing human nature as Christ did, how extraordinary it was to say that Nathanael was a person devoid of deceit. Why? Because this particular evil was then—and is today—so utterly commonplace (Isaiah 59:13-14; Proverbs 12:5; Revelation 12:9). Let's read how God, through His prophet Jeremiah, describes deceit's effect on people and entire societies.

Can Jesus say of you that you are "without deceit" and that you don't live by a double standard or have a hypocritical lifestyle?

Jeremiah 9:3-6 says: "With tongues bent like bows they shoot their lies at one another. Truth does not win out in this land; *deceit* always seems to triumph. One evil leads to another because they don't know who I am. Let everyone be careful of his neighbor, and think twice before he trusts his brothers; for *every brother is ready to cheat and deceive*; every neighbor is prepared to lie when it suits him. In this land of liars, friends have *no misgivings about deceiving one another*; no one even thinks to tell the truth. They've trained their tongues to utter lies; *they wear themselves out with all their sinning*. You live in a place where *deception is assumed*; as their lies pile up, they refuse to acknowledge Me" (*The Voice* translation).

Considering this, where do you and I personally stand regarding the extremely serious and damaging sin of deceit? Can Jesus say of us—as He did Nathanael—that we are "without deceit" and that we do not live by a double standard or have a hypocritical lifestyle? In other words, could any of us be acting one way in public and another way at home? Are you genuinely honest in your words and conversations, in your financial dealings and

Please see page 6



Photo by Elijah Hiett/Unsplash

Sometimes we are deceptive of what our true nature is. We have to look at ourselves within and root out the sin that is within.

Passover Check-In

These open-ended questions are designed to help you examine your heart as part of your Passover preparation. They are not meant to test knowledge or aptitude, but rather to serve as a guideline for you as you consider and prepare your heart for the Passover. Be honest with yourself, and dig deep!

- Do I have faith that God hears my prayers? Can I remember any answered prayers from this past year? Am I at peace waiting for answers yet to come?
- Do I feel the Holy Spirit working in me and through me? Or do I feel like I am striving on my own?
- Do I let my knowledge and calling blossom into good works and love for others? Or do I focus inwardly and am fearful to act on my calling?
- Do I let God's hand lead me forward in my Christian walk? Or do I feel stuck, spinning my wheels?
- What is my motivation in following God's truth?
- Am I content with what I have? With where I am in my life? If not, why?
- Do I have anger, bitterness or resentment that I am ignoring or refusing to address?
- Are my thoughts and emotions under control? Do I struggle with rage, depression, anxiety or other overwhelming emotions?
- Fear of _____ is holding me back from _____.
- Am I honest in my evaluation of myself? Do I tend to be too harsh or too lenient?
- Do I present myself honestly to God and to others?
- Do pride and defensiveness get in the way of my growth?
- Can I let go of shame and guilt, and have faith that I am forgiven? If not, why?
- Do I enter all my relationships with an attitude of humility and service?
- My relationship with _____ is strained because _____. I need God to help me _____.
- This year, I need Jesus Christ's sacrifice to heal me of my _____. Do I believe He wants to heal me physically, mentally and spiritually?
- I really have trouble forgiving _____, even though I want to and know I should.
- I really have trouble believing God when He says He will _____.
- Do I get caught up comparing myself to others?
- I am inspired to focus my Bible study on _____.
- I know I often fall short in the area of _____; but God has really helped me to be better with _____.

Everyone falls short in some of these areas. If this list has brought some painful or deeply rooted problems to light, you are not alone! Focus your prayer and meditation as you ask God to lead you through them. Let us move into this Passover season with hearts that are softened and sincere. UN

The Ten Commandments Series The Fourth Commandment: Part 2

■ The Fourth Commandment, Parts 1 and 2, focus on how to observe and celebrate the Sabbath. Part 1 is in the previous issue of *United News*. The Fourth Commandment is stated in Exodus 20:8-11, which is directly quoting God, and Deuteronomy 5:8-12, where Moses is reviewing the Ten Commandments for the Israelites. By comparing the slightly different wording, a fuller understanding of the commandment emerges.

by Don Hooser

The Ten Commandments are the “law of liberty,” the very opposite of a “yoke of bondage” (James 1:25, 2:12).

And the Fourth Commandment especially represents freedom. Freedom from materialism, fear and insecurity—Sabbath-keepers are trusting in God to be their daily Provider. Freedom from the monotony of living every day just the same. Freedom from loneliness because of the time reserved for fellowship with God and God’s people. And we could list other freedoms.

Scriptures Commonly Misunderstood

Exodus 35:3 says: “You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day.” How should we understand this? Weren’t they allowed to start and maintain fires for warmth? Of course they were. Most Bible scholars are certain this refers to fires used for construction purposes, like shaping metals and smelting ores. God foresaw that some people would be tempted to get their work fires started and blazing hot so as soon as the Sabbath ended, they could immediately begin to do their productive work. The lesson is that God forbids using any part of the Sabbath for *preparations* for work.

The same principle explains why “a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day” was committing a serious sin (Numbers 15:32-36). This was not a matter of picking up a few sticks for a campfire. He evidently was gathering firewood in *preparation* for work to be done after the Sabbath, apparently excusing his actions as not being the creative “work.” Clearly God wants us to

avoid *planning, preparations and worrying about our jobs* during the Sabbath!

A major purpose of Sabbath fellowship is getting to know our brothers and sisters in Christ. Some people, with good intentions, have advocated that we limit our Sabbath conversation to talking about the Bible and the sermons. With that limitation, we could never get to know each other at church services. When getting acquainted, it’s completely appropriate to ask questions about each other including the questions, “What is your occupation?” “Where do you work?” “What are your hobbies?”

The Sabbath Day Is Family Day!

Sabbath-keeping is a huge benefit for family relationships. Each of us needs to spend time alone to pray and study, but the Sabbath should also be a time of family togetherness. When couples have busy lives, husbands and wives often can have more quality time to spend together on each Sabbath. The Sabbath is often the most relaxing and enjoyable day of the week for couples.

When there are children at home, parents should do their best to make the Sabbath loving, educational, inspiring and delightful. That includes family prayer and Bible study, which are wonderful to do every day, but they are especially important to do on the Sabbath. Eating together is also edifying and joyful.

Each family prayer time can involve everyone praying a short prayer, one at a time. This is an ideal way for children to learn how to pray on their own from their hearts. How inspiring it is for parents to hear the prayers of their children!

The Sabbath is a time for parents to teach God’s truth to their children and do it in pleasant and interesting ways that include interactive discussions. There are other spiritually edifying things families can do together on the Sabbath, including singing, listening to godly music, playing Bible games, writing cards to people, visiting a shut-in, fellowshipping with another family, playful wrestling and marveling about God’s Creation.

Everyone can pitch in to share the necessary chores of food preparation, setting the table, minimal cleanup, taking care of pets, etc., so no one person has to spend much time with such routine things.

The Sabbath is also a great time to review the inspiring prophecies of how wonderful the world will become after Christ returns to Earth. Chapters 3 and 4



Photo by Allen Taylor/Unsplash

The Sabbath day is family day. It is a day where we can relax with loved ones and focus on our great Creator. It is a day to delight in.

of Hebrews make it clear that the weekly Sabbath pictures 1,000 years of peace, joy and prosperity after Christ’s return! Hebrews 4:9 says: “there remains a rest for the people of God,” and the Greek word translated “rest” is *sabbatismos*, which literally means “Sabbath rest!” The Millennium is also often called “the great Sabbath!”

Church Services

Each Sabbath is a time for a “holy convocation” (Leviticus 23:2-3). A convocation is an assembly and it is holy because it is convened by God. He doesn’t just invite us—He summons us! We worship God privately all week, but God clearly wants us to participate in group worship each Sabbath when a congregation is within a reasonable distance.

Some believers try to justify staying home by saying they can pray, study, sing hymns and listen to webcasts while at home. First of all, it is God who ordains church attendance. Secondly, we give God joy when He sees His people coming together to give honor and homage to Him.

Thirdly, we should be dedicated to *giving* more than *getting*. Although a person can *get* some spiritual benefits while at home, he cannot fellowship and *give* of himself to his spiritual family. At church services, you can get to better know and encourage one another, nurture relationships, welcome new people and visitors,

and often learn about personal needs you can pray about. As a spiritual community, we need to communicate and commune with each other. By attending Sabbath services, we show love for God and for God’s other children.

Let’s rest our minds from “things on the earth” so we can set our minds “on things above” (Colossians 3:2).

Furthermore, there are many routine tasks that need to be done to enable a church service to run smoothly. If you are there on a regular basis, the congregation can rely on you to fulfill regular responsibilities. As you serve, you experience significant satisfaction and you develop a “servant’s heart.”

If you live too far from the nearest congregation, or if sickness prevents you from attending, it’s a blessing if you have Internet access and can connect with one of the several live webcasts of United Church of God Sabbath services. If you don’t have Internet access, you can be put on a mailing list to receive a CD once every eight weeks that has recordings of eight sermons.

Please see page 10



Upcoming Events

Phoenix Spring Dinner and Dance

You are invited! The Phoenix congregation is hosting a Spring Holy Day Dinner and Dance on April 20, the Sabbath between the Holy Days. Services and the dance will be held at the Four Points Sheraton in North Phoenix. Following services will be fellowship time out on the lawn to enjoy the beautiful Arizona sunset. Brethren will then enjoy a dinner followed by a dance social.

The cost per person for a plated dinner with vegetables, dessert and drinks will be \$45 for beef filet, \$40 for Salmon, and \$35 for chicken. The cost includes tax and gratuity. We realize this is not an insignificant amount of money for dinner, and we want to make sure everyone can attend. As it is during the Holy Days, it would be permissible to use second

tithe for this event. If you are able and would like, you can supplement your meal price to enable others to attend and offset the costs of the event.

Book your group rate for UCG Phoenix Spring Services and Dance 2019 Room Block at www.marriott.com/events/start.mi?id=1550858057808&key=GRP.

Accommodations with local brethren may also be available. Please email if interested, or with questions: ucgspringholydance@gmail.com.

Please register by cutting out the bottom section and sending it in, or by using Eventbrite at www.eventbrite.com/e/ucg-phoenix-spring-holy-day-dance-2019-tickets-56610736236?aff=shdd2019

Lorelei Nettles

Family Name: _____

Total Number of Attendees: _____

Number of Meals: Chicken: _____ (\$35 each)
 Salmon: _____ (\$40 each)
 Beef Filet: _____ (\$45 each)

Extra Donation: \$_____

Total Payment: \$_____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

I would like to be contacted regarding hotel accommodations:

Yes No

Mail checks and registration to:

SHDD c/o Ferriers
2841 W. Campbell Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85017

The Sin of Deceit

continued from page 4

in your relationships with others? Also, do you approach service honestly and righteously without ulterior motives or a hidden “agenda” and without “strings attached?”

Are You Honest With Yourself?

Additionally—and critically important—are you genuinely honest with *yourself*? Or could we in fact be deluding ourselves into thinking we are upright when we may not actually be? 1 Corinthians 3:18 exclaims: “Let no one deceive *himself*.” It’s essential that you are completely forthright with yourself so you can see the “real you”—the way God does. Only God knows what is *really* going on in our hearts and minds (Hebrews 4:12-13; Jeremiah 16:17). He knows our inner motiva-

We need to be candidly straightforward with ourselves so we are not fooled into thinking we are something or someone we are not.

tions. Since that is the case, we need to be candidly straightforward with ourselves so we are not fooled into thinking we are something or someone we are not (Jeremiah 17:9).

In your various interactions with others, it’s important to put yourself through a self-examination process. This is so you can determine if what you say and do is not false or misleading. In taking this action it is vital to seek God’s help through prayer and Bible study to obtain His superb insight so you can take any necessary corrective measures. He is more than willing to help you as you make every effort, through the power of His Holy Spirit, to genuinely love Him

Feast of Tabernacles Meetings



Several met in Victor Kubik's office at the home office for a video conference with US, Canada and Caribbean Feast coordinators.

The annual Feast Coordinators conference convened on February 4 and 5. There were 32 involved, including Feast coordinators from the U.S., Canada and the Caribbean, home office staff and volunteer support.

President Victor Kubik opened the conference with the main reasons for observing the Feast. He quoted Deuteronomy 14, “that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always,” and stated that this is the “why” of the Feast of Tabernacles. The planning and preparing of all the subsequent details stems from this vision.

The Operation Manager of Ministerial and Member Services, Mark Welch, greeted everyone and expressed how he is looking forward to the Feast of Taber-

nacles aspect of his new responsibilities. He noted that at the Feast we are there to worship the coming King.

Some new ideas were discussed, but mostly it was determined to follow the principle of “if it isn’t broken, then don’t fix it.” Some behind-the-scenes improvements will be implemented.

We discussed special music, budgets, youth education, membership surveys at each site, assigned articles for publications related to the Feast and better use of the websites for each Feast site.

This year, cards will be available at all U.S. Feast sites to sign for those who are not able to attend the Feast of Tabernacles in person. **UN**

Charles Melear

How to Earn Airline Miles for the United Church of God

The United Church of God can accumulate frequent flyer points without affecting your personal miles with Delta. Anytime anybody books online with Delta, you can directly enter a code (along with your Skymiles number).

Check the box that says, “My company is a corporate rewards program member.” Program type will be *Delta Skybonus*. The member number is US954529758. This code can be entered on any Delta flight you take—at the Feast or year round.

Charles Melear

and always do what is right (2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 34:14).

Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

So, bearing all this in mind, where do you stand? If we are truly honest with ourselves, we will admit that we—as are all human beings—are not without deceit to one degree or another. We all fall short of “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). What can we do about this condition? The scriptures not only explain the way forward but offer inspiration and reassurance.

For instance, we are encouraged “to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through *deceitful* desires” (Ephesians 4:22, English Standard Version). Moreover, it’s important to lay “aside all malice, all *deceit*, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking” (1 Peter 2:1). When you diligently and faithfully carry out these

and other divine instructions, you can be assured that nothing will separate you from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35). Plus, you are promised to receive the magnificent gift of eternal life in God’s family (see Hebrews 2:10), which He generously offers “to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality” (Romans 2:7).

Finally, the Passover and Spring Holy Days are significant opportunities for you and I to sincerely and deeply examine ourselves individually for sin. In this regard, your loving, heavenly Father desires that you “be *renewed* in the spirit of your mind, and *put on the new self*, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (Ephesians 4:23-24, NASB).

Therefore, considering sin in general, and the sin of deceit in particular, strive to rid it entirely from your life through the awesome power of God’s Spirit. Great blessings are in store when we do! **UN**



Local Church UPDATES

Southwest Missouri Women's Enrichment Weekend

We had 40 women in attendance from around the region including Alabama, Georgia, Baltimore and Cincinnati. Nine women who registered were unable to attend primarily because of the weather.

All of the women from the Springfield Church were instrumental in the success of the weekend. In addition, the women from Tulsa, Oklahoma, provided a fantastic chili dinner on Saturday evening, and Springfield and Kansas City combined efforts to provide the continental breakfast Sunday morning. Decorations were provided by our "Southern Belles" from Alabama and Georgia.

Though Sabbath services were cancelled because of lingering ice on the roads, all assembled at the event venue for lunch and an abbreviated message from Mr. Victor Kubik highlighting the story of Lydia in the new testament and updating the brethren about the home office and the work of God.

The presentations, around the theme, "Running with Horses—Become Spiritually Fit," were phenomenal. Each provided us with tools for our spiritual journey,

including ways to stay focused on our prayer and Bible study, avoiding things that may distract us, staying the course in tough times, not growing weary and loving our "lemons" (trials). We were given pointers about horse training and the association to our training as Christians. Finally we heard "Gallop to Greatness," which covered lessons from horse training and claiming the prize of overcomers from Revelation. A special treat was getting an update from Beverly Kubik about "other sheep" from around the world. She reviewed trips that she and Mr. Kubik were able to take to Argentina, Zambia and India. Mrs. Kubik shared stories about the dedication to God's way and adoption of the fundamental beliefs of United Church of God by people in these regions.

Our service project this year was to collect gently used sweatshirts and coats, coffee and condiments and hygiene products for a local halfway house. The proceeds from the silent auction will be sent to ABC for a scholarship for an international student. Just over \$800 was raised for the scholarships!



Some of the ladies who attended the Southwest Missouri Women's Enrichment Weekend.

Some comments from the exit survey underscore the success of this year's Women's Enrichment Weekend. One woman said she benefited from the presentation about the international areas and how United Church of God is instrumental in assisting struggling congregations around the world. Another comment was, "Each year I am able to come, the bonds between us all grow stronger. We all have different ways of viewing things and it helps to have a new perspective. I loved the theme this year, and the words from the 'horse's

mouth!" A final comment was that, "It's been personally revealing about things I need to change."

There were many more positive comments about feeling encouraged, formation of bonds, and not wanting to miss any Women's Weekends. This was the best year ever! We had younger women in attendance who are making plans to attend next year, sealing the goal of Southwest Missouri Women's Enrichment Weekend, 2020!

Merna Eppick

Greensboro Ladies Club



Ladies of the Greensboro, North Carolina, Ladies Club.

The Greensboro, North Carolina Ladies Club meets once a month before the start of Sabbath service. The group discusses topics that encourage and uplift each other. The group decides what subjects to discuss by having each of the women write down a topic they would like to know more about. Each paper is placed in the club's idea jar. A topic is pulled out at random following each meeting to decide what the next meeting will be about. One of the members is selected to introduce the upcoming topic and everyone in the group gives input on it.

The Greensboro Ladies Club also conducts several service projects such as; a drive to collect and donate paper product to a local food pantry each month, and signing and sending cards monthly to the sick and shut-ins.

The Greensboro women are dedicated to serving and offering encouragement to each other and to the brethren. If you are in the Greensboro area for a visit, feel free to stop in on the third Sabbath of each month at 1:30 p.m. and join the discussion.

Sadie Parks

Upcoming Events

New Feast Site in France

Your brothers and sisters in God's Church in France are pleased to welcome you to the Cap Estérel Vacation Village in Saint-Raphaël for the 2019 Feast of Tabernacles in France!

Overlooking the Mediterranean on the French Riviera, the Pierre and Vacances Cap Estérel Village sits on 450 acres of protected natural landscapes and stunning gardens, offering pleasant accommodations, a 4,100 square-foot heated swimming pool with lifeguard supervision, tennis courts, a nine-hole golf course, driving range, hiking trails and a full-service spa. Many recreational activities are also available within a short drive, including scuba diving, kayaking, horseback riding and jet skiing.

In addition to daily church services, Bible studies, and fellowship during the Feast, we will offer afternoon excursions to nearby points of interest including the "perched" village of St. Paul de Vence and the Principality of Monaco. We also plan to have an open day to enjoy activities in the area, a family day and an evening talent show and dance.

As with prior years, the Feast in France

will be all-inclusive and include nine nights lodging with breakfast, lunch and dinner. Cap Estérel is approximately a one-hour drive from the Nice Airport. A shuttle bus transport will be offered to and from the airport for those who do not wish to rent a car. Opening services begin at 8:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 13.

Registration via the UCG Festival registration site will open March 1 and a €25 non-refundable booking fee must be paid via the Feast in France Shopify E-Commerce site to secure the registration. The €25 booking fee covers the cost of Feast administration.

For more information on the Pierre and Vacances Cap Estérel Holiday Resort, including a two-minute promotional video, please visit: www.pierreetvacances.com/gb-en/fp_CEL_self-catering-cap-esterel-holiday-village.

You can also visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/UCGFranceFOT/ or email us at feastinfrance@gmail.com.

We look forward to welcoming all those interested in joining the French brethren in Cap Estérel for the Feast this year. **UN**

Announcements



Ezekiel James Duran

Feb. 15, 2019



Austin Joseph Wells

March 28, 2018



John & Peg McClain

50th Anniversary



Bill & Carolyn Robinson

50th Anniversary

Births

Ezekiel James Duran

Proud parents Andy and Amber Duran would like to announce the birth of their second son, Ezekiel James Duran, on Feb. 15, 2019. He was born a week early but still weighed 8 lb. 4 oz. and was 21 in. long. Ezekiel means "God who strengthens," and both parents believe God's strength got them through the short, intense labor with a happy and healthy addition to their family. The Durans are currently residing in Loveland, Ohio, where Andy is working as a Ministerial Trainee for the Cincinnati congregations.

Austin Joseph Wells

David and Carrie Wells of Troy, Illinois, are pleased to announce the birth of their son, Austin Joseph, who was born on March 28, 2018. Austin weighed in at 7 lb. 13 oz. and 21 in. long. Austin gets a lot of attention from his three older brothers Ryan, Braden and Caleb. He is a very joyful and patient baby. The family is overjoyed with this blessing.

brethren enjoyed a cake and a card to commemorate their 50 years together.

Bill and Carolyn met while attending Morgan State College, now known as Morgan State University, in Baltimore, Maryland in 1968. They married at Carolyn's mother's home on Feb. 16, 1969.

Bill and Carolyn started attending the Worldwide Church of God the last Sabbath in 1974. Bill was ordained a deacon while in the United Church of God on Pentecost in 2000 and then an elder during the Days of Unleavened Bread in 2014.

When asked for any wisdom they would like to share about success and longevity in marriage, Bill and Carolyn shared that they have had mutual goals and both want to be in the Kingdom of God, which is the glue that holds them together. They also have a love of Motown Music.

They have two daughters, a son and four grandchildren.

Everyone who knows the Robinsons think of them with respect and appreciation. We wish them many more years of wedded bliss!



Julia Mae Langdon

Dec. 24, 1939-Oct. 9, 2018

will all miss her dearly. She looked forward to God's Kingdom.

Julia is survived by her husband Delbert Langdon of Sweet Home; daughters Rosalie Maugh of Eugene, Sandra Rain of Sweet Home, Joyce Carr of Eugene, Rita Bennett of North Plains; brothers George Green, Ronald Green, Harold Green, Charles Green, Robert Green, Alfred Green; 10 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by brother Elmer Green, and sisters Dorothy Kimler and Carmen Brown.

Daniel Salcedo

Daniel Salcedo was born on Aug. 27, 1936 and was a member of a large family. He had six sisters and three brothers. Originally from El Paso, Texas, he moved to Southern California with his family at the age of 5, and remained there the rest of his life.

Dan loved music and education, and studied both in college, first earning his undergraduate degree, and a few years later, his Master's degree in School Administra-

tion. He spent over 45 years with the Santa Ana Unified School District in Southern California, leading the administration at several schools in the district. He was principal of the largest school in Orange County, Santa Ana High School for many years, with an average of over 3,000 students, until his retirement in 2008.

But even more, he loved his family. In 1958, he married Esther Noel, and they had four children, 14 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Dan was also devoted to serving God's people and active in the Church. A member of the United Church of God, he was a long-time elder, providing shepherding and leadership to his local congregation in Garden Grove. He frequently shared his God-given musical gifts in services. For many decades, he sang solos with his strong tenor voice and led the congregation in hymns. He also directed choirs, including multiple regional choirs formed for church services, along with choirs at the Feast of Tabernacles, held in many locations around the world and attended by thousands.

Here is what Mario Seiglie wrote in honor of Dan Salcedo: "Dan Salcedo's life as an elder for over 40 years, faithfully serving the UCG Garden Grove congregation and over the Church choir, reminds me of some of the last words of King David, 'The God of Israel spoke. The Rock of Israel said to me: 'The One who rules righteously, who rules in the fear of God, is like the light of morning.'

Please see next page

Announcements

continued from previous page

at sunrise, like a morning without clouds, like the gleaming of the sun on new grass after rain" (2 Samuel 23:4-5, New Living Translation). Yes, he refreshed people. The Santa Ana High School had a moving tribute to Dan on Friday, Feb. 1 with close to 100 in attendance. They don't do that for just anyone.

"Dan was a great aid to me personally,

Is Your Life a Living Letter?

continued from page 3

by an outsider. His legitimacy arose from the outcomes, the fruits of his ministry. People could see changed lives resulting from his preaching and service and the work of Jesus Christ in their lives. The certification was not written on a piece of paper or tablet, but inscribed on their hearts. Paul clearly states the writing instrument was the Holy Spirit and the ink is the Word of God.

Now how's that for a letter of recommendation to authenticate Paul!

Here's some background to the immediate statement Paul made about the Corinthians. When he wrote this second letter to them, the church had made some substantive changes from what Paul had previously written to them. The Corinthians had corrected sinful and inappropriate conduct and attitude.

Paul's correction in 1 Corinthians was severe. The congregation was divided into various cliques. People were taking one another to court. But the greatest offense was a case of gross sexual misconduct in a family, and it was generally known in the congregation and tolerated. Paul was upset with their lack of spirituality and told them in direct terms to straighten out all these transgressions of law and decency.

They did.

Paul sent his servant Titus to Corinth to find out the church's reaction. When reports from Titus reached Paul, he found they had indeed taken his letter to heart and repented. He then praised them in the most complimentary manner.

"For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.

"Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish wrong. You showed that you have done everything necessary to make

helping prepare agendas for our ministerial meetings and with deacons and deaconesses. The last time the choir met to celebrate Dan's more than 40 years as a choir director was in a member's home. Over 40 choir members, young and old, celebrated Dan's guidance and leadership as choir director. Yes, he was like the gleaming of the sun on new grass after rain.

"We look forward to seeing him again and his dedicated and talented wife Esther in God's kingdom."

things right. My purpose, then, was not to write about who did the wrong or who was wronged. I wrote to you so that in the sight of God you could see for yourselves how loyal you are to us. We have been greatly encouraged by this.

One of God's purposes in man is to create a being whose heart is molded to become like His.

"In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was about the way all of you welcomed him and set his mind at ease. I had told him how proud I was of you—and you didn't disappoint me. I have always told you the truth, and now my boasting to Titus has also proved true!" (2 Corinthians 7:10-15, NLT).

Paul was gratified his working with the Corinthians, and the transforming power of God had produced such a wonderful church that could be called an endorsement of Paul's ministry: "Clearly, you are a letter from Christ showing the result of our ministry among you" (2 Corinthians 3:3, NLT).

Can We Be a Living Letter?

Can we apply this lesson? Can our lives be considered a Letter of Endorsement? It can be if we examine the elements that make up the letter.

Recall what Paul said, the writing instrument of the letter was the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to us when we are baptized: "Each of you must repent of your sins, turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to show you have received forgiveness for your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

The words (which is the ink of the letter) spoken by and inspired by God should be etched onto our hearts. The words are no longer sayings, maxims, interesting adages that can be appreciated from a distance. Rather they become engraved on our hearts and become an inseparable part of our being, our mind and spirit. Those words should be engraved so deeply they transform us from what we were to a beautiful new creation in God. This is a miracle!

One of God's purposes in man is to create a being whose heart is molded to become like His. It has to be of our volition and choice, though. God will not force it on us, but He will help us. It is given to all who want it.

When God gave the Ten Commandments, He acknowledged that the people who received them didn't have the tools to make them a part of their being: "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29).

The Holy Spirit was not generally available to these people and hence their behavior was usually substandard, unbelieving and rebellious. But God's intent was for people to apply the words and make them part of their lives.

In Proverbs, God speaks of internalizing His commands and His way of life: "My son, keep My words, and treasure My commands within you. Keep My commands and live, and My law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart" (Proverbs 7:1-3).

The prophet Jeremiah prophesies of the coming of the New Covenant, which spells out what God is doing with man and how ultimately all people will reach their purpose in being: "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says the LORD: 'I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people'" (Jeremiah 31:33).

In one sense it's quite a straightforward process of becoming submissive to God and compliant with His working in you. He will give you His Spirit if you want it and ask for it. Obedience results in life for us and our family.

Rivers of Living Water

God uses the Holy Spirit to write His Word on our heart. It also continues as an outward function, a very valuable and productive one.

When Jesus was speaking publicly, He promised the Holy Spirit and made an observation of how it would work: "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39).

The Holy Spirit that flows into us becomes part of us and now has an outflowing function! The Holy Spirit flows like a river out of our heart. It is described as flowing *living water*. The Holy Spirit doesn't remain in our heart, but flows out dynamically doing its work.

What happens to flowing water? We may never fully know, but we do know flowing water gives *life*. Water has healing and nourishing capabilities. It is significant that Jesus Christ could confidently state that a person who would receive the Spirit of God would be a worker of good and benefit others.

A river reaches places its source will never know. As Jesus described the workings of the Spirit to His disciples, He said: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Work of God through His Holy Spirit that is given to His disciples has had a far-reaching effect. Through the mighty working of the Spirit of God, the word about Jesus Christ literally spread to the "ends of the earth."

The outflowing of the Spirit of God has long-lasting effects on the lives of people who we come into contact with. Don't sell short the godly kindness and love you extend to those around you. Words we

With God's Holy Spirit flowing out from us, we never know where the stream will ultimately flow and the nourishing and healing that will take place.

speak can be healing, refreshing and be remembered for years.

Some time ago a person made a large donation to a cause I was closely connected with. I was surprised by his generous gesture. I called to thank him for his gift. He told me several decades ago I had spoken to him at a difficult time in his life and patiently spent time listening to his plight. He never forgot that. So, years later, when he saw a need related to our helping people in developing countries, he remembered how he was helped and wanted to reciprocate.

With God's Holy Spirit flowing out from us, we never know where the stream will ultimately flow and the nourishing and healing that will take place.

A Living Letter

When Paul addressed the Corinthian Church as a "Living Letter," it was not a clever statement. It was profound, with implications of substance, life, goodness, permanence and eternity. It pointed to the purpose and literally the heart of what a Christian is.

God's Word and Mind must be indelibly inscribed on our person, into the deepest parts of our hearts. The dynamic Holy Spirit continues to act in us as it flows out of us, as Christ said, to the "ends of the earth." It is a beautiful analogy, and is inspiring that God would give imperfect beings like us this great gift! **UN**

Through the Eyes of a Father

continued from page 1

said our goodbyes she said, "I feel better now; see you in a few days Daddy."

I had so many thoughts and emotions running through my head that it was impossible to concentrate. The overwhelming question of "why" cried out loudly in my mind. Why was my child lying in fear and pain while I was powerless, unable to reach out and help her? I cried out to God for help and even begged to take her place, but there was no answer. I felt numb, useless and completely helpless as a father. Thankfully, through God's loving hands, those feelings did pass and another mighty miracle unfolded before our eyes.

During my daughter's health trials, I experienced a change of perspective that stopped me dead in my tracks. While this change was very painful, the experience impressed upon me something that I'll never forget.

Most people have faced one or more defining moments in their lifetimes like my story. Those moments can be so intense or extreme that they have the power to totally change our perspective and worldview. Even though the trial or situation may not be pleasant, this different perspective has the ability to open our eyes to see a deeper meaning. We gain the ability to see something hiding in plain sight that can add an enhanced level of understanding.

A change in perspective is also used by some modern artists today through the use of the *anamorphic style*. In anamorphic artwork, an artist arranges objects in an assortment that at first glance seems to be just a plain pile of junk. The artist carefully plans the whole installation and places seemingly random objects in specific patterns, selecting them by color and size so they will resemble a famous portrait or image only when viewed from a specific angle. If a viewer is to enjoy the artwork as intended by the artist they must look at it through a par-

ticular device, or just from the right angle. Once the viewer steps into this perspective, the results are jaw-dropping.

How can a perspective change enhance our understanding of the Passover? What could we see by looking at this event through the eyes of the greatest Artist of the universe? Not only do we see an innocent Man enduring such hatred and humiliation, we also find a Father watching from a far distance who must witness this horrific chain of events against His Son. The Passover is a family event and holds a love story for the ages.

When we cry out, let's remember that our Father sees us, loves us and will comfort us no matter what we may be facing.

Although I would never want to relive those events again, I'm thankful for what I was allowed to learn from it. It took me a long time to recover emotionally from that event, but gradually the lesson that God was showing me became evident. What I had experienced was only a small portion of what He had faced when His Son cried out from a garden and said, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me." He cried out to His Abba, His Daddy, not once, but *three times* in prayer (Matthew 26:36-44). He was so distressed His sweat became as great drops of blood falling to the ground (Luke 22:44).

How did the Father feel when His Son cried out to Him, "Daddy, is there another way?" He reached out and comforted His Son, and gave Him the strength to continue as planned. It would have been easy for the Father to end this horrible event immediately, but for our salvation both willingly stayed the course (Matthew 26:53). Those final words in His prayer, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done" are proof of how that moment with His Daddy strengthened Him to continue as planned (Luke 22:42).

What if God had stepped in and rescued His Son from the pain, humiliation, and the certain death? If He changed the situation, the purpose of Jesus Christ's First Coming would have been in vain. We would still need a Savior.

Just as in my daughter's situation, God had made it apparent that this surgery was His will. If we had the faith to go through to this point, why stop now? What benefit would it have been for my daughter if my body was replaced on that operating table? Anything that was performed on my body would not change anything for her life to continue. All the prayers, anointings, planning would have been for nothing. This had to be our focus and that is what gave her the courage to follow through with the plan. Even though a father's heart was breaking to witness this happening to his child, I knew that for her life to continue the plan had to go forward as well. We both had to submit to the will of the Father, put our faith in Him, and follow through.

Think of the events surrounding the Passover. For life to continue for us, the Passover had to be carried out as planned from the foundation of the world. The Father, at that very moment, had to exercise one of the greatest examples of love in the history of mankind. Jesus Christ also had to humbly submit to what the Father decided. They both had predetermined what they must endure for us to become part of the God Family and were determined to follow through with it (1 Peter 1:3-9). Our Father did not leave His only Son alone when He cried out. He had compassion and sent comfort through an angel (Luke 22:43).

In hindsight, I understand in part what God the Father must have felt when He heard His Son praying in the garden. Like an anamorphic art form, from one angle it looked hopeless and heartbreaking, from another, the perfect expression of love between a Father and His Son. Passover leads us to a beautiful goal intended by the ultimate Artist, God the Father.

When I remember the words of my daughter calling out to me from that hospital bed, I hear the words Jesus cried out to His Father that heart-wrenching night. It was agonizing for me, a father, to watch my child face this fearful situation, but her life was saved because of the pain of surgery. Our Lord and Savior saved each one of us through the pain and suffering He submitted Himself to. My daughter was not alone, just as Jesus Christ was not alone facing that moment of anguish. Through the vision and comfort of a Father, life continued for my little girl and life was made possible for all mankind. I loved my daughter so much I knew I could not interfere with the surgery to save her life. Had I interfered, would she be alive today? Similarly, if the Father had interfered at any time, where would we be after death?

We, too, can have this type of vision if we consider what we are facing from the perspective of our Father. Both He and Christ gave us the perfect example those many years ago. This should encourage us to look beyond what we are facing (John 16:19-22) and view it from another perspective. Let's look at the events in our lives through His eyes and focus on the powerful love. Jesus Christ's hope and faith in the Father was fueled by the love His Father poured out on Him and the common vision they shared. We can experience this same love and vision as well. Although the events of the Passover are gruesome, horrific and painful, the end-result is sitting at the right hand of the Father and by this we have hope we will do the same in the coming Kingdom.

When we cry out, let's remember our Father sees us, loves us and will comfort us no matter what we may be facing. His vision is much clearer; He does not focus on the pain, but on the joy of His children being perfected for His Kingdom (Jeremiah 29:11).

This year let's add to our vision by seeing the Passover through the eyes of the Father. When we change our perspective, we will experience a love and a vision that will inspire us to continue until the end. **UN**

The Ten Commandments

continued from page 5

The Meaning of Sabbath "Rest"

"Sabbath rest" primarily means that we *cease working and stop participating in materialistic and non-essential mundane activities*. We *arrest* those activities. Think of what we say about a rolling ball when it stops. We say the ball has come to *rest*. Notice the wording in Genesis 2:2-3 (emphasis added): God "*ended* His work" and "*rested from* all His work." God was not tired and was not resting.

Many Sabbath-keepers regularly have to expend more energy on the Sabbath

than on any other day just to travel and attend Sabbath services. And the misunderstanding of the word "rest" can counteract a decision to serve others with a *labor of love*. Jesus Christ emphasized that it is "lawful" and wonderful to "*do good on the Sabbath*" with acts of "mercy" (Matthew 12:7-12; also Mark 3:4 and Luke 6:9).

Getting some mild exercise on the Sabbath can be refreshing to your mind and body. It can be a walk, short jog or short swim. And it's wonderful to go outside where you can be inspired by God's awesome Creation! We learn about God by studying His "Book" of revelation and His "book" of creation—His Word and His works (see Romans 1:20).

Exercise is especially important for

young children. Energetic children can come to think of the Sabbath as a miserable time if they are restricted to being still all day. Of course, decisions regarding what activities to allow depend on the age of the child. Little children certainly need some time to play. And if children burn off some energy before they go to church, they'll be less fidgety during services.

"Rest" is a good topic on which to bring this article to a rest. How shall we rest each Sabbath? Let us rest from working on our *physical* needs so we can work on our *spiritual* needs. Let's rest from the *mundane* in order to pursue the *sublime*. Let's get our nose in the *Book*. Let's rest from *our* creations to focus on *God's* creations. Let's rest from laying up "treasures on earth" and focus on laying up "treasures in heaven"

(Matthew 6:19-21). Let's rest from serving *ourselves* so we can reach out and serve *others*. Let's rest our minds from "things on the earth" so we can set our minds "on things above" (Colossians 3:2). Let's rest from the secular and temporal so we can focus on what is sacred and timeless. Let us use precious holy time to become more holy as God is holy.

What a blessing that God is enabling us to understand and appreciate the broad range of what the Bible means by Sabbath rest!

On each and every sacred Sabbath day, as we rest from our work and worries, let us refresh, rejuvenate and "rejoice in the Lord" (Philippians 3:1; 4:4)! **UN**

Read the rest of The Ten Commandments Series here: www.ucg.org/tags/the-ten-commandments-series.

Updates from Ministerial and Member Services

On Dec. 8, 2018, Warren Poffenroth was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Heidi, serve in the Calgary, Alberta, Canada, congregation.

On the Sabbath of Dec. 15, two new assistant pastors were announced in Phoenix, Arizona. Scott McKeon now assists pastor Jim Tuck in the Northwest Phoenix area and Monte Knudson serves in the Phoenix East area. The Phoenix church became two congregations in January. Phoenix area elders and speakers also help serve the Northern Arizona congregation as well as Show Low, Arizona, and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

On Dec. 29, Jonathan Hill was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Carol, serve in the San Jose, California, congregation. On Jan. 5, 2019, James Malizia was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Stacey, serve in the San Francisco Bay area, California, congregation. On the same day, Tom Meece was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Terry, serve in the Petaluma, California, congregation.

Due to the death of pastor Roger Korthuis on Jan. 15, Mr. John Elliott was appointed the interim pastor for the congregation in Sedro-Woolley, Washington.

In February, Mr. Stan Martin was transferred to serve as pastor for congregations in Dallas/Ft. Worth (Texas), and Lawton (Oklahoma). We thank Mr. Fred Whitlark for his service as interim pastor for those congregations.

Mr. Doug Wendt has relocated to Tampa, Florida, where he now serves as pastor for the congregations in Tampa and St. Petersburg.

Mr. Nick Lamoureux of the Southern New Hampshire congregation was hired to serve as a Project Coordinator in Malawi. Nick and his wife, Megan, moved to Lilongwe, Malawi, in February.

Those of us in MMS greatly appreciate your prayers, support, and encouragement for those men and wives who will be making these changes to serve God and His people in these specific areas.

Chris Rowland

As we look at our individual lives, as a young person in the Church, or as a family member educating children in God's Way, how can we do our part to effectively assist the Church preaching the gospel and preparing a people? How can we do our share to help all of us grow in love and fulfill God's great purpose for us?

Christ, in the Sermon of the Mount, gave us one important example on how we can do the Work, by being a light to the world. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). Are we bearing good fruit? "By their fruits you will know them" (Matthew 7:15-20). We can preach the gospel to the world with our actions. We are created in Christ Jesus to produce good works (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Be Ready to Give an Answer

As a result of that godly example, our actions will indeed speak louder than our words. People will sooner or later ask you for "a reason of the hope that is in you" and then we will have the opportunity "to give an answer of the hope in you with meekness [with gentleness and a teachable spirit] and in the fear of God" (1 Peter 3:15). We need to be ready and prepared. That is *preparing a people*.

Each of us needs to be changing to *be partakers of the divine nature* (2 Peter 1:4) by using His divine power (God's Holy Spirit) that proceeds from the Father (John 15:26). We are doing the Work of God by being personally involved, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, in the act of becoming ready to rule in the Kingdom of God. This is our role, as God never forces us but leads us by His Spirit (Romans 8:14). We can only change ourselves, by exercising self-control and bearing the fruit of God's Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). We cannot change others.

The work of overcoming the old man and putting on the new man (Ephesians 4:17-32; Colossians 3:5-24), by being malleable to the work of the Master Potter (Isaiah 64:8), prepares us to be kings under the King of kings (Revelation 19:16). We become a beacon of light and hope, an example to others. Overcoming until the end (Revelation 2:26) is therefore connected with preaching the gospel to the world as a witness.

What a blessing we have "because God from the beginning chose us for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

God's goal for us to be His children teaches us to be united. Christ, on the night that He was betrayed, prayed that we "all *may be one*," as the Father and Christ are One, that we "*may be one*" in them (John 17:20-23). What powerful words of unity. They demonstrate the level of unity we all must strive for.

As part of God's Work, we need to ful-

fill Christ's last recorded prayer and desire for unity by holding onto the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3) until we all come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:13). The alternative is to hold onto the proverbial twigs, being tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, which can cause division (Ephesians 4:14).

We all have a responsibility to do God's Work and to build on Christ's foundation with *gold, silver and precious stones*, rather than with *wood, hay and straw*. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Corinthians 3:12-13).

A Sense of Urgency

As my wife and I watched the lionesses working together and hunting, we were fascinated by how focused they were on their goal. They did not allow any distractions to divert them from that goal. At the same time, they were fully aware of their environment, knowing they had a unique opportunity that would only last for a limited time. They needed to act urgently before the waterbuck left the watering hole or saw them. The male waterbuck was also on alert. He sensed the danger and calmly and quietly organized the females and the babies to herd together and peacefully depart from the area in the opposite direction. He then stayed between the herd and the lions.

As we live in perilous times, we also need to watch and pray always that we may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man (Luke 21:36; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 Corinthians 16:13-16).

Just before the buck left, we saw a few lionesses growing a little more urgent. They nearly charged. But then they realized they had missed their opportunity. After the buck had moved to a safe distance, the lionesses stood up, gathered together with their cubs and waited for the next opportunity.

In our Christian lives, *today is our opportunity*. We know the times we live in. There is a false sense of peace and safety, but suddenly destruction will come upon the world. We must not fall asleep and let this catch *us* unawares. Don't fall into any false sense of security. Watch and be sober (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6).

So let us all be focused on our vision. Put on the new man. Be a light. Be an example. Bear good fruits. Let our actions speak louder than our words. When people ask us the reason of our hope, answer in meekness and fear. Watch and be ready. We must not allow ourselves to get caught in twigs. Hold onto the trunk of the tree with a sense of urgency (2 Timothy 4:2) and we will reach our goal. **UN**

The Lion and the Waterbuck

continued from page 3

being ready and urgent in our role to accomplish God's Work in us.

A Clear Vision Required

During the Creation week, God highlighted His purpose for mankind: to be in His image and His likeness (Genesis 1:26). Beyond the physical, "we are to be a new creation" in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) putting on the new man, "*created to be like God* in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:24, NIV).

As the apostle Paul stated, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—*heirs of God* and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:16-17). How often do we read over these encouraging words without really grasping the full meaning? To be co-heirs of Christ's glory (John 17:5)! To be of the same form of beings (Philippians 2:6)!

God has an awesome vision for us: "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. *And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure*" (1 John 3:1-3).

We need to internalize the vision God has given to us, so we individually fulfill our God-given responsibility in the spiritual body of Christ, the Church of God (Colossians 1:18, 24). United's vision

statement clearly explains we are to be "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)." We are to be united by *what each one of us can provide*. This is how we can achieve our great God-given goal.

We all have a responsibility to do God's Work and to build on Christ's foundation.

How Can I Contribute to the Work of God?

To answer that question let us look at United's mission: "Our mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, [as a witness], to make disciples in all nations and to care for those disciples (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20)"

This description may be summarized in two statements: *preach the gospel* and *prepare a people*.

Some think we all need to take a ministerial role to *preach the gospel*. Others may think we just need to pray and pay. But there is much more we can do! Considering we are members of Christ's spiritual Body (Romans 12:4-6), we understand there are many other parts in the physical body that perform critical functions to support the entire body. Let us not minimize how important a role we all have as individual members of the Church for its overall health, unity and end-time Work.



What's New In MEDIA?

~~BEYOND~~
TODAY

Television Airing Schedule

Title	Host	Literature	Airing Period
<i>Will I Go to Heaven?</i>	Steve Myers	<i>Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?</i>	March 10-16
<i>Prayer: A Tool for Spiritual Growth</i>	Gary Petty	<i>Tools for Spiritual Growth</i>	March 17-23
<i>Why Europe Matters: The Lethal Union of Church and State</i>	Darris McNeely	<i>The Book of Revelation Unveiled</i>	March 24-30
<i>Utopia: Is It Humanly Possible?</i>	Darris McNeely	<i>Christ's Reign on Earth: What It Will Be Like</i>	March 31-April 6
<i>You Can Understand Bible Prophecy</i>	Steve Myers	<i>You Can Understand Bible Prophecy</i>	April 7-13
<i>Why Were You Born?</i>	Gary Petty	<i>Why Were You Born?</i>	April 14-20
<i>The Biblical Alternative to Easter</i>	Gary Petty	<i>God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope</i>	April 21-27
<i>The Book of Revelation Unveiled</i>	Darris McNeely	<i>The Book of Revelation Unveiled</i>	April 28-May 4

~~BEYOND~~
TODAY

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mar. 24: ABC Charity Auction, Cincinnati, Ohio

Apr. 6: Southwest Regional Formal, Lebanon, Tennessee

Apr. 18: Passover

Apr. 19-26: Feast of Unleavened Bread

Apr. 20: Phoenix, Arizona Spring Dinner/Dance

May 17-19: Women's Weekend, Spokane, Washington