



United Church of God *an International Association*

Len Martin
Chairman

Victor Kubik
President

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Dearest brethren,

Pentecost 2020 for the United Church of God, *an International Association*, celebrates a historic landmark. On this Holy Day 25 years ago we held our first official church services throughout the United States and in many congregations around the world. The words of Jesus Christ rang loudly to us that day: “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). What a glorious moment for the Church!

Not many days before that Pentecost of 1995, we held a conference of several hundred ministers in Indianapolis, Indiana, in which we declared and confirmed our beliefs and set the pattern for our governance. We could not help but notice how unfolding events in our Church tracked with God’s festivals. Our exodus coincided with the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. We departed because our former church home suddenly reverted to a belief structure that we had long abandoned. We had to make a painful departure from what was our spiritual home into an uncertain future. Our faith was put to the test in this crucial time.

But God was with us and did not abandon us. In the weeks between Passover and Pentecost we were able to reorganize and celebrate a new beginning. Today, we commemorate not only the birth of the Church of God in 31 A.D., but also of the United Church of God in 1995.

After that Pentecost, our original transitional board of directors of nine men immediately went to work. In the living rooms and kitchens of our homes, our first order of business was to think of our brethren. We first organized summer camps for our youth that were then held a few weeks later. We also organized the Feast of Tabernacles in new venues throughout the country and around the world. We established relationships with brethren in similar situations in the Philippines, Australia, Canada, South America, Africa and Europe. Indeed, it was an exciting time! In our hearts, we knew we would survive because we again had to fight the good fight of faith that comes by working under pressure.

We were committed to proclaiming the truth of the gospel vigorously through whatever means we could—even though at that moment we had no literature, no magazine, no booklets, and no website. At that time, the Internet was still in its infancy.

We soon rented office space in Arcadia, California. We started a member news publication called *New Beginnings* in which we kept the Church informed. Through the summer of 1995 our first United Church of God booklet appeared—*What Is Your Destiny?* We also secured the www.ucg.org URL, which has now grown to be one of the most visited religious

denomination websites in the world. The *Good News* magazine made its debut at Feast of Tabernacles time with an initial print run of just 20,000 copies. Despite the trauma of the moment, it was the power and comfort of the Spirit of God in our midst that sustained us.

In December of 1995 a large conference of all ministers was held in Cincinnati, Ohio, where our Constitution and Bylaws were ratified. This included the Fundamental Beliefs. The Transitional Board of Directors now became the 12-member Council of Elders, and the offices of chairman and president were separated. Three positions on the Council were mandated to come from international areas.

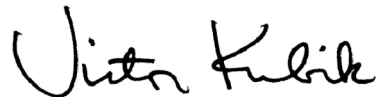
As we move beyond the 25-year benchmark we take stock of what we have learned and what we can pass on to our children and the next generation. The biggest lesson is the one that we focus on today at Pentecost. It was expressed by the prophet Zechariah when he described the true power behind the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. It was at a time when the spirits of the people had faltered: “‘Not by might nor by power, but by *My Spirit*,’ Says the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6, emphasis added).

It is God’s Spirit that brings, and will bring, all the success we see. Besides power, God’s Spirit also gives the necessary love, peace, patience and other fruits.

Our faith has been put to the test through fiery trials, but that stress is what makes us strong. Courage is only known at the point of reality and testing. We learn, too, that what is built spiritually is not of man’s doing, but of God’s.

Let’s rejoice on this Day of Pentecost that focuses on the Holy Spirit and the Church that will meet Jesus Christ when He returns. Thank you for your faithful service!

In Christ’s service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victor Kubik". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Victor Kubik