



United Church of God *an International Association*

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

Issue 435

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Personal From the President...

Dear fellow servants of God,

On This Day 75 Years Ago . . .

On August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. Three days later, another device was detonated over Nagasaki. More than 200,000 people perished in these fireballs as World War II came to a screeching halt. The choice of how to end the war was between wiping out the civilian population of two large cities versus invading Japan and sustaining possibly a million casualties. The agonizing choice was to kill the civilians. This choice still haunts our consciences.

It was an extraordinarily deadly act that ended World War II. It will be a supernaturally Divine intervention that will save mankind from itself. Jesus Christ describes this in His end-time Olivet Prophecy: "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:21-22).

Today is a memorial to words of Isaiah: "The way of peace they have not known" (Isaiah 59:8). Jeremiah as well: "They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace!' when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14).

On this day, I would like to share an account of Sajio Ibaraki, who was 16 years old when he witnessed the flash of Hiroshima while fishing in Kochi, about 75 miles away. He conveyed his story to Dr. Yumi Yamamoto, who is a very good friend of Beverly and me. Yumi, too, lives in Kochi on the island of Shikoku. She is an ophthalmologist who studied in British Columbia and is fluent in English. Over the past 20 years, we have worked together on humanitarian projects in Japan and the Philippines (www.lifenets.org/japan). She has visited our brethren in the Philippines and been a guest in our home.

Dr. Yamamoto was Sajio Ibaraki's English tutor and, over time, they became close friends.



Sajio Ibaraki

Mr. Sajio Ibaraki was born in 1929 in Japan. His first experience of the war was in 1937 when he was eight years old. It was the Second Sino-Japanese War (Battle of Shanghai) that had become a trigger to World War II.

In 1945, Sajio Ibaraki was a first-year high school student in the countryside of Kochi. He was with classmates who had evacuated to Kochi from other areas in Japan to avoid air raids over the big cities of Japan.

Sajio remembered August 6, 1945, as a beautiful and peaceful hot summer day. He enjoyed fishing on the river with his friends. The mountains were green and the sky was bright and clear, but all of a sudden, he saw a flash of light in the sky! Later, he understood that this was the moment the atomic bomb had been dropped in Hiroshima. After three days, on August 9, another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, causing unspeakable devastation.

In 1948, after graduation from high school, Sajio moved to Hiroshima. There he met many people who experienced the war and the atomic bomb. Today, most of those people are no longer living.

Sajio recalled one friend who is now more than 90 years old. She sustained excessive burns from the sudden explosion, but fortunately survived. However, as her skin healed, dreadful keloids formed, leaving her body scarred.

This scarring was not uncommon. Mr. Ibaraki knew another lady who was the wife of his boss at the bank. He remembered her to be a very beautiful lady who always wore elegant kimonos. First he did not know why, but later he heard she also had horrible keloids on her legs and could not wear skirts.

The population of Hiroshima was 350,000 before the atomic bomb. Within a few months after the bomb was dropped, over 166,000 people were killed either directly from the explosion or from radiation exposure. Later, more and more people died because of radiation damage.

Sajio says he is distressed and frightened by the fact that there are still some people in the world who debate about the right or wrong of using nuclear weapons. Having lived through it, he categorically states that men should not use these weapons ever--without any question. This should be the message and lesson from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Sadly, though, nine nations have stockpiled about 14,000 warheads, many of them ready for immediate use.

Because it has been 75 years since the atomic bomb, most people who experienced the war have already died and fewer people really know how dreadful, how meaningless and how stupid war is. Mr. Ibaraki stated that after the war, whether you might win or lose, in the long run all you feel is a pity and a regret for yourself and others. There is no real winner in any war.



Genbaku Dome inside the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park is a place almost all Japanese have visited, as well as travelers from all over the world who come and reflect on what happened.

Real peace, though, will come not from words or platitudes, but from a changed heart that only God can give through His Holy Spirit. And that day is prophesied to come!

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Then finally the world will be able to fulfill these words: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4).

In Christ's service,

Victor Kubik

Personal from Ministerial and Member Services...

Dear Ministers and Members,

This past Monday, we held a one-day online conference with pastors and elders from the Northwest region, webcast from Cincinnati. A number of pastors and elders gathered together in pastors' homes in the Spokane, Portland and the Seattle areas, so at least there was some opportunity to fellowship and spend time together in person. There were also a number of elders who joined from their homes. Links to selected recorded sessions from the last regional conference in the South Central region were sent to elders and their wives in advance to watch and listen to prior to the one-day online conference.

The sessions were facilitated by home office personnel from their homes. Everyone had an opportunity to engage in an interactive discussion about the recorded sessions. Steve Nutzman, the regional pastor, also facilitated an open discussion. Of course, we would have much preferred having the full conference

in person, but everyone seemed very grateful for the technology and the opportunity to see one another and conduct the one-day online conference.

Pastoral Changes



Frank and Valerie Fish

Mr. Frank Fish has been appointed pastor for the congregations in Los Angeles and Bakersfield, California. Mr. Fish and his wife, Valerie, have lived in the area for over 40 years, and Frank has served as an elder in the Los Angeles congregation for 20 years.

We would like to thank Robin and Susan Webber for their service to the Los Angeles and Bakersfield congregations over the past 10 years. Mr. Webber will continue to serve as pastor for the congregations in San Diego and Redlands, California, along with Las Vegas, Nevada.

Wishing you all a very inspiring and peaceful Sabbath!

In God's love and service,

Mark Welch, Operation Manager for MMS

Feast of Tabernacles Updates

Tomorrow, on Friday, August 7, the Feast Webpage (feast.ucg.org) will be updated showing all current U.S. Feast sites. Regrettably four sites were cancelled due to social distancing regulations that limited attendance. Three new sites will be offered that will accommodate larger attendance with less stringent regulations.

Those who are registered at the sites that have been canceled will receive an email on Thursday evening, August 6, with instructions for how to update their registration information.

Festival Verbal Announcements for All U.S. Congregations Sabbath, August 8

Regrettably four U.S. Feast sites were cancelled due to social distancing regulations that limited attendance. If you were registered for a canceled site, you should have received an email on Thursday night with instructions for how to update your registration.

Three new sites are now available that will accommodate larger attendance with less stringent

regulations. To see all U.S. sites now being offered, go to the Feast Webpage (feast.ucg.org).

We realize that some members may not be able to attend live services and will make personal arrangements. However, there will still be at least two different Feast sites in different time zones that will webcast live daily services.

Updating Registration

If you are going to attend the Feast site where you are currently registered, and which has not been canceled, no action is needed. If you are going to update your registration, there are 3 overall categories, and everyone should fall into one out of three and be able to register appropriately.

1. Attending a site listed on UCG webpage (this means you intend to attend services).
2. "Not Attending In-person UCG Services" (this means one of the following):
 - o You are staying at home.
 - o You are going to a UCG Feast site, but will not be attending services.
 - o You are making personal arrangements.
3. "Satellite Site" - your local congregation is sponsoring a local site.

If you need to update your reservation, please do so by this coming **Wednesday, August 12.**

How to Update Festival Registration

Instructions:

1. Log into the UCG.org account which was used to register your household.
2. Access your household's Feast registration in one of two ways:
 - o Locate your confirmation email (subject line "UCG Festival Registration Complete" or "UCG Festival Registration Submitted") for 2020 and click the link in the email. -OR-
 - o Click on your name in the upper right corner. In the box that appears, click the "My Registrations" link. Locate your Feast registration for 2020 in the list on the right and click the "View" link.
3. Toward the middle of the page, click the "CHANGE SITES" link.
4. In the "Choose Site" dropdown menu, select your new site. The selected site will appear under the "New Site" header on the right and will indicate how many spaces are available at that site.
5. Scroll down under the site photos and click the "Change Sites" button. You'll be returned to your registration page, with your new site displaying at the top of the page.

Pastors and Festival Advisors - How to Run Festival Reports for Local Congregations

Pastors are encouraged to remind members to update their registration, if needed. Instructions for how to run a local congregational report will be emailed to all pastors on Friday, August 7.

Elders at Canceled Sites

We are asking all elders at canceled sites or those who are no longer able to travel internationally not to change their registrations yet. Ministerial and Member Services will send instructions to elders so that they can indicate their preferences for where they would like to be assigned. After they are assigned/approved by MMS, then they should register at feast.ucg.org.

Choral and Instrumental Music at the Feast

One of the highlights of the Feast of Tabernacles is being inspired and uplifted by the special music performed during services. The coronavirus pandemic has brought questions about the wisdom of having choirs and instrumental ensembles at the Feast.

An ongoing scientific aerosol study sponsored by the International Coalition of Performing Arts with lead scientists from the University of Colorado and the University of Maryland recently published preliminary results and recommendations based on initial testing.

They found that singers produce aerosol as well as wind instruments and concluded that the virus which causes COVID-19 can travel in respiratory aerosol. They mentioned that there are a few things musicians can do to somewhat reduce but not eliminate the risk of transmission.

Considering these findings and various news reports of church choirs and the spread of the virus, we have concluded not to have choirs or instrumental ensembles at our Feast sites this year. We are considering the possibility of virtual choir performances.

We will still have special music and sing our hymns to praise and honor God. We look forward to the time when we can return to having choral groups at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Nationwide Press Release

The United Church of God and *Beyond Today* launched a nationwide press release on Tuesday, August 4. The release, found on PR Newswire, points the public to answers and hope during these difficult and trying times. Please click below to read the release, which has now been viewed by hundreds of news outlets and reprinted in many:

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/find-the-way--hope-and-help-online-feature-launched-by-united-church-of-god-301104407.html>


This particular press release leads our readers to a new [ucg.org](https://www.ucg.org/members/news/find-the-way-ucg-media-center-updates) news page titled, "Find the Way," [<https://www.ucg.org/members/news/find-the-way-ucg-media-center-updates>]. This page will be regularly updated with current insightful commentary, articles, special media productions and more from our media team and writers--plus news of interest about the United Church of God.

The first post features "Help and Hope for the Brokenhearted" and "Are You Worn Down by Weariness." During the current lockdown and fear from the COVID-19 pandemic, more and more people are looking for hope as they face loss of jobs, failing income, and no contact with friends and family members who have become ill or exposed. Suicide rates are climbing, as is drug use and other addictions--especially among our children and teenagers.

Plans are for regular press releases pointing the public to our "Find the Way" page, with new content and a focus on the work of the United Church of God each time. Please continue to pray for the ongoing work of the Church to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God to our troubled world.

-- Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services

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