



# United Church of God *an International Association*

Len Martin  
Chairman

Victor Kubik  
President

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Dear fellow elders and brethren,

This is my first time to write to you since being selected as Council chairman in May. In just over a week the Council of Elders will meet, from August 17 through August 20. You can see that we have a full agenda (attached). Your prayers for humility and wisdom upon the members of the Council would be most appreciated as we deliberate the items before us.

Consider how much our world has changed in only five months. In the United States, the government mandates said to be necessary to combat the COVID-19 pandemic have caused considerable unrest. Many citizens are concerned about the eroding of individual liberties or their rights. There is also considerable civil unrest and racial tensions with some groups even pushing for the elimination of police departments. One thing that should now be obvious to us is the unbridled power that government can exert upon its people when it wants to. It should also be apparent that we really do not have as many freedoms as we might have once believed.

However, it is important that we do not get so emotionally worked-up or otherwise drawn in to the unrest that is happening around us. We must resist the temptation to let anger fuel our emotions and cause us to act in a manner that is not fitting for the household of God. I would encourage you to review the apostle Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus. Words as powerful today, as they were then! "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, *with all lowliness and gentleness*, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the *unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Ephesians 4:1-3, emphasis added).

At the end of the same chapter Paul continues: "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:29-32).

If we are not diligent about this we might bring our emotions and frustrations to Sabbath services and inadvertently stir up strife. The Sabbath should be our sanctuary away from all that is happening in the world and we should revere it. "You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:30).

The author of the book of Hebrews writes: "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner

of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25). Do you see the Day approaching? The events of the past several months should give us a pretty clear indication that it’s not that far off. We should be making every effort to return to in-person Sabbath services as soon as we possibly can. We need to be “assembling ourselves together” for the purposes of stirring one another up.

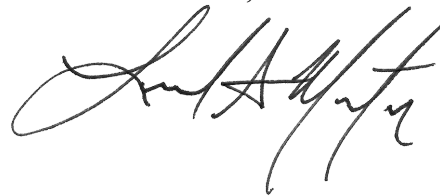
In Matthew 24, when the disciples came to Jesus and asked for a sign of His return and the end of the age, I doubt His answer was one they expected. Jesus said there would be deception, wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes. He also said His disciples would be delivered up to tribulation and death! However, He also said, “But he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

Yes, we are living in troubling times, but we know that, “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). Even in the midst of all that is happening, we are blessed with an understanding of where everything is headed. The vast majority of people on the earth today simply do not know what we know.

We have come too far to turn back. What we need is endurance. In the very best of all of us there is a certain lethargy, a certain habit of procrastination—putting off until tomorrow, things we should attend to today. Let’s blow the dust off our Bibles, roll up our sleeves and be about our Father’s business! Jesus made it clear: “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4). We do not know how much daylight is left for us to preach boldly the truths of God.

Please pray daily for the administration, the Council of Elders, the ministry and all of the brethren. The times in which we live can weigh heavy upon the hearts and minds of all of us, but God the Father and Jesus Christ will see us through. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

In Christ’s service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Len Martin', written in a cursive style.

Len Martin