



United Church of God an International Association

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

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Personal From the President...

Dear fellow servants of God,

Yesterday we recorded three more Beyond Today television programs with a studio audience consisting of our Ambassador Bible College class. The programs were "Human Identity and the Family of God" by Darris McNeely, "Why Do Good People Suffer?" by Steve Myers and "Beware the Mark of the Beast" by Gary Petty.



Beyond Today recording on September 2.

We also held a video conference of all U.S. Festival coordinators in final preparation for the upcoming Feast of Tabernacles. We are confident that God will direct and protect us in the keeping of His commanded assemblies at this challenging time. We thank everyone for their patience, restraint and consideration for not just doing what is lawful to do, but what is expedient and caring for the people we are with. Our faith has been challenged. But remember that faith is more than a feeling. James defines what it looks like in James 2:18: "I will show you my faith by my works." The works that we do are those that reflect Christ's love and respect for others, not something that magnifies us and our rights. Let's do all things decently and in order and let's all move forward together to get through the obstacles of life. Above all, let's be *thankful* for all the blessings and freedoms we have.

Where Are We in Prophecy?

As we approach the fall Holy Day season, I have been thinking a lot about biblical prophecy because the

upcoming High Days literally burst with prophetic meaning. Essentially one half of the plan of God--the death and resurrection of the prophesied Messiah, the time for us to come out of sin and come under the sacrifice of Christ, and the coming of the powerful Holy Spirit--these have been moved over into the "fulfilled" category of Bible prophecy.

Now we press forward to unfulfilled prophecies of great meaning for us: the prophesied return of Jesus as King of Kings, the transformation of human disciples into eternal beings, the establishment of the incredible Kingdom of God, and finally the Great White Throne judgment, following which comes a humanly indescribable time when an all-new earth and heavens will miraculously appear. As God Himself tells us, "Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore" (Isaiah 65:17, New Living Translation).

All these prophecies embody what we will joyfully observe in a few short weeks.

How different from the common stereotype of a biblical prophet! Instead of thinking about astonishing, thrilling good news when the word "prophet" comes up, many automatically think of an angry, bearded, long-haired man boring down on passersby with piercing eyes, ranting words of condemnation. The Greek word *apocalypse*, a word which simply means *revelation* or *unveiling*, has become twisted, connected with terrible things typically associated with a disastrous end of the world or other terrible outcomes.

Yes, much of Bible prophecy describes harsh and painful events. But ironically, and perhaps surprising to those not familiar with the Word of God, these cruel events actually reflect in large measure the collective consequences of the breaking of God's law! As God declares throughout the Bible, disobedient people bring much of their trials and troubles down upon themselves through their own actions.

Even so, do we realize that most Bible prophecies transcend dire predictions? Prophecy delivers a powerful message: God is in control and God is achieving His purpose with keen deliberation. His purpose is one of good news, of an incredible human potential.

Through prophecy, God affirms His relationship with us and explains His involvement with the world. Through prophecy we come to understand the full stature of Jesus Christ, an understanding that comes when we experience the fullness of His first coming and appreciate the humanly indescribable power that materializes in His second coming!

By showing us what the future holds, God demonstrates His love for humanity. He reveals and preserves prophecies that describe the building of a new society centered on God and Jesus Christ, a society that will live by the values that guarantee peace, prosperity and happy families and lives.

This is the embodiment of the very gospel of Jesus Christ, a gospel rich with marvelous prophecies!

We live in an era of fear, anxiety and uncertainty. But we in the Church of God are blessed with understanding--especially prophetic understanding--that brings peace and calmness. We can withstand and overcome trials in part because we confidently know that whatever season of life we are in, we will come out of it, We *will* win.

As we contemplate this prophetic season before us, let us consider that the ancient prophets did far more than reveal future "inside" information. They provided knowledge about a relationship with our Creator and what we mean to Him. With the matchless gift God grants to us through prophetic understanding, we see more clearly who God is, His love for, and His relationship with humanity.

Human history on this planet represents something far more than a mere patchwork of disconnected events. Bible prophecy produces a remarkable narrative that ties everything together and gives our lives meaning and hope.

Indeed, God poured out a special blessing upon us today. As the apostle Peter tells us, "The prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours"--the very grace of becoming a child of God, being transformed into an eternal spirit being at Jesus' return--"searched and inquired carefully...it was revealed to them that they were serving *not* themselves, *but you*, in the things that have now been announced to you...things into which angels long to look" (1 Peter 1:12, English Standard Version).

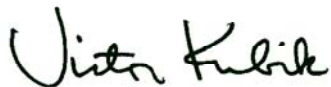
This prophetic grace is the very "hope of glory" for you and me, of Jesus Christ living in us (Colossians 1:27).

Where are you in prophecy? Right in the palm of God's hand, who is deliberately fulfilling your destiny!

Here now is our inspiring work that lies ahead: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns!" (Isaiah 52:7, NLT). We, as the spiritual assembly of God, declare openly the coming time when all will fall on their knees and recognize: "The LORD has demonstrated his holy power before the eyes of *all the nations*. All the ends of the earth will see the victory of our God" (verse 10). A time of astonishing world peace is prophesied. It is coming as surely as day follows night.

This is where you stand in bible prophecy. May we all rejoice in this marvelous biblical prophetic truth in the days ahead!

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Recent Ordination



Jeff and Alisa Lockhart

On August 29, 2020, Jeff Lockhart was ordained into the ministry. He serves as an Assistant Pastor in

the Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, congregation with his wife, Alisa.

Inside United Podcast



Scott Ashley - Samaritans in the Gospels, Part 1

Scott Ashley teaches about the Gospels at Ambassador Bible College. He stops by to discuss the background concerning some of the people and cultures that Jesus encountered, particularly the Samaritans.

<https://www.ucg.org/inside-united-podcast/inside-united-podcast-173-scott-ashley-samaritans-in-the-gospels-part-1>

Send us your questions, comments, or suggestions at podcast@ucg.org.

Listen to past episodes: <https://www.ucg.org/inside-united-podcast>

Winter Family Weekend Canceled

We're saddened to report that this year's Winter Family Weekend had to be cancelled. Major factors leading to that decision include the difficult restrictions of the sports facilities, hotels and the State that would have made it almost impossible for us to assemble together. We are certainly disappointed but look forward to getting together next year for Winter Family Weekend.

Spiral Hymnals Shipped!



The ABC Class of 2021 assists with packaging hymnals for shipping.

Those who ordered spiral hymnals will be happy to know that they have been shipped from the home office this week. Our Ambassador Bible College students volunteered to help package the hymnals for shipping, which expedited the process. If you ordered a hymnal and you live in the United States, you can expect to receive your hymnal before the Feast of Tabernacles. If you live outside the U.S., it will probably take longer for your hymnal to arrive.

LifeNets/ABC Água Viva school project in Angola

Dear brethren and contributors for the LifeNets/ABC Água Viva school project in Angola,

The brethren and ministry in Angola send their grateful thanks for your contributions so far towards this community service project which will greatly serve the local community near the Boa Esperança (Good Hope) congregation of the Church of God in Luanda, Angola. This project is to extend the 7 existing classrooms to 14, as well as to upgrade the teacher's office.



We have currently received in excess of US \$20K for a targeted US \$30K toward the cost estimates done about a year ago by an independent building contractor. As we have successfully transmitted monies to Angola for this project, the brethren have now called four building companies to give final cost adjustments at today's values and expect final quotes in the next few days. They hope to then award the contract to the most cost-effective proposal.

If you submitted donations to a general account at LifeNets, please ensure that you inform the LifeNets directors that your donation was specifically for this purpose. Also, to receive a tax receipt at the end of this tax year for your donation, please be sure to submit your mailing address to LifeNets, if you have not done so already.

From a most grateful Church leadership and membership in Angola.

-- Jorge de Campos

Compass Check Magazine - Ideas Welcome!

During Monday's home office Focus Meeting we invited the *Compass Check* staff to join us and give an

overview of the magazine's purpose and how it is produced. The *Compass Check* staff includes Dan Preston (Editor), Kourtney Kovanis (Managing Editor) and Mitch Moss (Content Editor). Here is a summary of what they shared.

The purpose of *Compass Check* magazine is to inspire Church youth, ages 12-18, to respond to the gospel message. Most have been taught the basic doctrines of the Bible since before they can remember. Our goal is to help them take this knowledge and see how it can apply in their daily lives as they grow to adulthood. While we strive to make *Compass Check* encouraging and uplifting to our readers, we recognize that--just as adults do--our teens face many challenges and pressures from the world we live in. We don't shy away from tackling difficult topics in our teens' world such as gender identity, social justice, dating and, of course, coping with the challenges of a pandemic.

Although the main focus of *Compass Check* is for teens, many adults and new attendees may find its articles helpful as well. Those new to the Church may find *Compass Check's* approach of taking big, sometimes difficult things to understand, such as end-time prophecy or the process of spiritual conversion, and breaking them down in small, easy-to-digest pieces. By doing so, our hope is to make the teachings of the Bible easier to understand, without losing their impact or meaning. You can read the current as well as previous editions of *Compass Check* at <https://www.ucg.org/members/compass-check>

If you have a thought or idea for a *Compass Check* article, we'd love to hear from you! If a teen in your area is not currently receiving *Compass Check* and would like to, you can contact us at compasscheck@ucg.org

Sermon Disc Set #145 (Tabernacles) Available

Sermons newly published for the Feast of Tabernacles edition of the Sermon Disc Program (SDP 145) are now available for download. You can access them, as well as archived SDP sermons at <https://www.ucg.org/sermon-disc-program>

The Sermon Disc Program is a service provided by the home office intended for shut-ins as well as for congregations needing video sermons when a live speaker is not available. If you have any questions, you can contact chaz_leathers@ucg.org or rudy_rangel@ucg.org.

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