



United Church of God an International Association

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

Issue 462

March 11, 2021

Personal From the President...

This week I'd like to cover some of the news, events and recent items of interest in the Church.

Myanmar

First, I would like your continued prayers for our brethren in Myanmar where the military recently took over the government. This has evoked widespread protest where scores of people have been killed.

Myanmar (formerly Burma) is a nation of 54 million people that, since its independence in 1948, has had a continuous history of civil war and genocide that has left an estimated nine million people dead. In August 2017, a deadly crackdown by Myanmar's army on Rohingya Muslims caused hundreds of thousands of people to flee to neighboring Bangladesh. 24,000 Rohingya died in what has been described as "ethnic cleansing."

The United Church of God serves brethren in locations throughout the country. Aaron Dean described a few weeks ago in this *eNews* that there had been a détente of sorts, and the country had allowed foreigners to visit. Aaron and Michelle were able to keep the Feast there in 2017, and Aaron and Austin Jennings from Australia traveled there in 2019 to help with the Feast. But now, a coup has removed the government—which now threatens this easement. Darker days seem to be returning.

Last Friday morning in the U.S. (7 p.m. in Myanmar) we conducted an online Bible Study for our brethren in Myanmar. I was surprised by how good the connection was. Brethren were tuned in from several locations in Sakhangyi, where we have a congregation and brethren in the capital city of Yangon and other areas. The extraordinarily good connection allowed excellent audio, video and interaction among us.

Translation was done by David Lay Beh in the United Kingdom. Also joining us was a couple living in Singapore as well as Austin Jennings from Australia. I spoke from Romans 8, where the apostle Paul bolstered the brethren in Rome to be courageous despite their suffering in the oppressive Roman world. Paul stated that all things work for the good of those who are called according to God's purpose—and if God is for us, who can be against us?

I was so moved by the bright, cheery demeanor of our brethren who live in such difficult circumstances. Please continue to pray for our people there. I thank all our volunteers and workers who are helping with communication, Bible studies and humanitarian support by

making sure that our brethren will have food, because uncertainty abounds.

We called a fast for this Sabbath at last week's meeting, to ask for God's protection for our brethren and that we can continue serving them from our countries where we have freedom and abundance.

ABC Charity Fun Show Last Sunday

Because of COVID-related restrictions, the Ambassador Bible College Class of 2021 could not host church members for its annual charity event, but the students presented a Fun Show on Sunday, Mar. 7, which raised money to support needed Church projects in Ghana. You can see a description of the needs at <https://lifenets.org/abc-2021-charity-fundraiser-for-ghana/>.

The show was streamed live from <https://abc.ucg.org/webcast/abc-charity-fun-show> with a button on the website allowing donations to be made to LifeNets, which handled receipting of the tax-exempt contributions. People have donated well over \$12,000 so far, which will enable the UCG congregation in Kwanyako to complete the construction of a building for Sabbath services and use it as a community center. There are also funds for upgrading the building for the Winneba congregation.

Every year, ABC students put in many hours of hard work preparing for this event. It is trying and exhausting, but very rewarding. Raising funds for a worthy cause is good, but this event also gives students an important accomplishment and helps them to learn skills that will be helpful in planning and conducting congregational activities after they leave ABC. Next year, we hope to host a traditional charity auction at the home office, and to support another good cause.

Focus Meeting at the Home Office

Each Monday morning at the home office begins with a meeting for employees where we begin the work week with a short program, discussion and prayer asking for God's blessing on our work for the week. The program usually lasts about half an hour.

Last Monday, Steven Britt, pastor of the congregations in Columbia (Maryland), Northern Virginia and Richmond (Virginia), spoke about his online Bible studies and made the following observations which I would like to share:

Preaching With Personal Engagement

“My first role in preaching the gospel many years ago was writing a personal blog, which was decidedly impersonal—it seemed to go out into the Internet abyss and I had no clue whether anyone would read it. Now, as a pastor, most of my preaching is *hyper-personal*, often one-on-one. There is no question that it's more exciting to convey God's truth to one active listener in person than to an unknown multitude at the click of a mouse.



Steven Britt talks to employees.

“Personal engagement is a fuel for more passionate, effective preaching—no matter the medium, I find myself able to put forth a stronger effort when I can see the potential effects in front of me. This is where my recent Bible study series on Facebook Live strikes a balance that I’ve found exciting. Many of my Facebook friends—family members, friends and acquaintances alike—tune in as I share the Word of God.

“A list of who is watching scrolls in real time across the screen. Knowing that I’m reaching people with God’s vital truth brings a visceral feeling in the moment that pushes me to really try my best to get the message through to them, especially those who do not believe as we do! The Bible study serves my local congregations first and foremost, but the effect of added enthusiasm is synergistic and benefits everyone, including myself.”

During our meeting on Monday, Mar. 1, we spent time honoring Don Hooser to celebrate his retirement after more than 54 years of employed service. This took place online, allowing us to share this time with both remote and office staff. His three children (Amy Hooser Wuerfel, Randy Hooser, Danny Hooser) were also able to take part in the celebration, and offered heartfelt comments to their father.



Don Hooser and his daughter, Amy, listen to employees acknowledging his many years of service to the Church.

Don’s beloved wife, Elsie (who died on Aug. 21, 2020), was a huge part of his ministry and

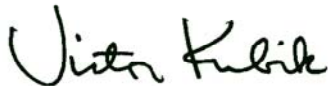
work. Both Don and Elsie were always very thankful to God for the very gratifying and joyful opportunity to serve in the ministry.

In past years, Don had served in the field ministry, but since 2007 he worked as one of our senior writers. He's looking forward to spending time with family and friends, more reading and studying, service to his local church and continuing to contribute articles for church publications.

Finally...

I wish you a safe and fruitful week as we count down towards the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. Let us be thankful for the freedoms and security that we currently have. Let us continue to pray for God's protection of His people, as Paul wrote: "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence" (1 Timothy 2:1-3).

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Pastoral Update

Ministerial and Member Services wishes to thank pastor John Elliott, along with his wife, Merrie, for their dedicated service to the Burlington, Washington, congregation. Mr. Elliott is planning to retire from the full-time ministry later this year. He has asked for a change of assignment so he may devote more of his time to serving the southern British Columbia congregations. This will also allow John to spend more time mentoring and training Wayne Ward to fill his role in Canada.

Rob Slocum became the pastor of the Burlington congregation effective this past Sabbath, March 6. We greatly appreciate Mr. Slocum now serving in this capacity along with continuing to pastor the Seattle congregation, with support from his wife, Tina.

Passover Video

Because of the different times for sunset, even in the same time zone, we have decided not to offer a Passover service webcast from Cincinnati this year. For most of the United States, the webcast would begin when it would not yet be Passover evening. For members with Internet access, the Passover service webcast recorded last year is available on the Members website at: <https://www.ucg.org/members/news/keeping-passover-at-home>.

The video may also be downloaded and put onto a USB drive for those who may have computers or DVD players but no Internet access. For members without Internet access, please

see that they are provided a copy of our “Passover in Your Home” administrative policy statement from <http://streaming.ucg.org/files/papers/UCG-papers-Passover-in-Your-Home.pdf>. You may need to print and mail copies to those without computer access. We will NOT be mailing DVDs of a Passover service from the home office.

Inside United Podcast



Victor Kubik - Passover Preparation

Victor Kubik gives a message on Passover and how to prepare for it.

<https://www.ucg.org/inside-united-podcast/inside-united-podcast-194-victor-kubik-passover-preparation>

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

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

Teen and Preteen Camp Registration Now Open

Campers and staff may now apply to camp at <http://uyc.ucg.org/>. Since there were no camps last summer, 19-year-olds may apply as campers at all teen camps this summer.

Parents and campers, camper scholarships are available for those who need financial assistance. Ask your pastor to see if a local scholarship is available or ask about applying for a national scholarship. National funds are definitely available, so please apply if needed.

Teen Camp Dates

- Cotubic, OH: June 20-27
- Hye Sierra, CA: June 27-July 4
- Pincrest, MO: July 11-18

- Northwest, OR: July 18-25
- Woodland, GA: July 23-30
- Winter Camp, WI: Dec. 26-Jan. 2, 2022
- Boundary Waters, MN: Summer 2022
- Challenger Sierra, CA: Summer 2022

Preteen Camp Dates

- Nacome, TN: May 30-June 3
- Florida: June 6-9
- Colorado: Canceled
- Ironwood, MN: July 11-14
- Texoma, TX: July 23-26
- Ochoco, OR: July 11-14
- Buckeye, OH: July 25-28
- Seven Mountains, PA: Aug. 1-4

—Steve Nutzman, UYC Coordinator

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