



## United Church of God an International Association

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

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### Personal From the President...

#### **Our Challenge—Bringing Every Thought to the Captivity of Christ**

Before the Passover, I'd like to share one more thought with you before we keep this annual observance. We've already covered two instances in Corinthians about how we are to examine ourselves so that we will take the symbols of the Passover in a worthy manner, and also that we test that our faith is genuine.

Genesis 1 explains that the creation of man was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). Higher than even the breath-taking marvels of the physical universe, we humans represent the *pinnacle* of God's Creation. He fashioned us in His image and likeness and has given us the freedom to act at our own discretion. We are deliberately allowed to make personal decisions, whether for good *or* evil.

With that background, consider this important point: a disciple of Jesus Christ embarks on a spiritual journey with his mind *and* heart. With his mind, a Christian makes choices based on knowledge. In Philippians 2:5 we read: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Our Savior and Elder Brother is the high standard.

That's a challenge! The journey that you and I are on is often one of a tension between what we naturally are apart from God and what God wants us to become. Every day we have to make choices continually about which path we will follow. God will equip us to make good choices, but He will *not* make those choices *for* us. We have to develop and exercise godly character and wisdom to make the right decisions. God invites us to share this process with Him.

God already knows our strengths and weaknesses. Note these words in Psalms: "O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; you understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether" (Psalms 139:1-4).

As humans, we are aware of ourselves, our environment, those around us and our Maker. In our prayers, we share our thoughts, praises and petitions with God. God answers those prayers, and this results in God Himself reforming our values, character and relationships. He helps us become ultimately what we need to become so we are more like Him.

Examining ourselves includes reviewing what we think. How are we doing?

We need to go beyond simply making an observation. We need to *act* on what we find out. As Christians, we need to realize that we are in a spiritual war! As Paul tells us: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh” (2 Corinthians 10:3).

Paul continues: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

We’ve considered some elements about the mind. Now, what about our hearts? The prophet Jeremiah succinctly summed up humanity’s focus apart from the knowledge of God: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9).

Christ breaks this down further in Mark 7. The story is about the Pharisees and some of the scribes who found fault with Jesus’s disciples because they failed to ceremonially wash their hands before eating. They claimed that this physical outward failure “defiled” them.

Jesus showed where *real* defilement comes from. It comes not from the outside, but from the innermost motivation, from the heart: ““Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?” And He said, ‘What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, *out of the heart of men*, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things *come from within* and defile a man”” (Mark 7:18-23, emphasis added throughout).

In a world that increasingly spurns the ways of God and embraces “these evil things,” this shows what man is by nature. The world often revels in these subjects, vividly portraying and reinforcing them in high-impact movies and entertainment.

Here’s a tough question: do we see any of this in our own natures?

What standard of comparison can reveal what may lie inside of us? The answer: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the *thoughts* and *intentions of the heart*” (Hebrews 4:12).

Much of human nature can be reduced to vanity, jealousy, lust and greed, coming to life as characteristics, reactions and motives for much of what we naturally think and do.

But there’s good news! When we come to repentance, we rise out of this morass that all but engulfs humanity. In examination of ourselves we commit to an ongoing transformation process. The apostle Paul pleads with Christians saying: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but *be transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

Jesus Christ is always willing to forgive, purify and fortify us: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

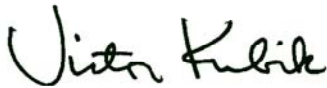
King David also prayed for understanding, cleansing and to be set back on the right path: “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression” (Psalm 19:12-13).

God will forgive us and help us in the direction of healthy thinking. We come to Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our iniquities. His astonishing sacrifice cleanses us from our sins.

We will shortly be observing the death of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The world increasingly disavows this critical truth, but to us it is the precious path to eternal life, which we understand is “the power of God and the wisdom of God” through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:23-25).

In the days remaining before the Passover, let’s renew our efforts to begin and sustain a fresh commitment to bring every thought of ours into the captivity of Christ. May God bless your efforts to become one with Him and His Son! (John 17:21).

In Christ’s service,



Victor Kubik

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From Ministerial and Member Services...

### Death of Angie Smith



Angie Smith

Angie Smith died on Monday, March 15, at the age of 94. She was a member of the Cincinnati congregations and widow of elder Ed Smith, who preceded her in death in 2012. Mrs. Smith

grew up on her family farm in Oklahoma, which has been in the family for four generations. She was a member of the Church of God for 68 years. She was a wonderful hostess and cook and a connoisseur of chocolate. Mrs. Smith is survived by two children Linda Smith and Deborah (Bruce) Kieviet; one granddaughter Angela (Robert) Whitaker, and two great grandchildren Ragan and Ryan.

### Upcoming Webcasts Available

The Cincinnati East congregation will webcast two services on the First Day of Unleavened Bread, but will not be able to provide a webcast for Passover or the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. Many alternate webcasts are available, and a listing of some of them appears below.

### Passover Webcasts

- [Charlotte, NC](#) - 7:45 p.m. EDT; password treeoflife  
Charlotte, NC phone: [+1-712-770-5049](#) passcode 396900#
- [East Texas](#) - 8 p.m. CDT; password treeoflife
- [Phoenix East, AZ](#) - 7 p.m. MST; password UCGPhoenix
- [Phoenix Northwest, AZ](#) - 7 p.m. MST; password treeoflife

### First Day of Unleavened Bread Webcasts

- [Charlotte, NC](#) - 1 p.m. EDT; password treeoflife  
Charlotte, NC phone: [+1-712-770-5049](#) passcode 396900#
- [Cincinnati East, OH](#) - 9:30 a.m. EDT, 2:30 p.m. EDT
- [Columbus, OH](#) - 1 p.m. EDT; password treeoflife  
Columbus, OH phone: [+1-602-580-9619](#) passcode 3633080
- [East Texas](#) - 2:30 p.m. CDT; password treeoflife
- [Fort Lauderdale, FL](#) - 10:30 a.m. EDT
- [Phoenix East, AZ](#) - 2:30 p.m. MST; password UCGPhoenix
- [Portsmouth, OH](#) - 1 p.m. EDT
- [San Francisco Bay Area, CA](#) - 1:30 p.m. PDT  
San Francisco Bay Area, CA phone: [+1-669-900-6833](#) webinar 867 5488 5979  
San Francisco Bay Area, CA Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UCGbayarea>
- [Vero Beach, FL](#) - 2:30 p.m. EDT

### Last Day of Unleavened Bread Webcasts

- [Charlotte, NC](#) - 10:30 a.m., 2 p.m. EDT; password treeoflife  
Charlotte, NC phone: [+1-712-770-5049](#) passcode 396900#
- [Columbus, OH](#) - 10 a.m., 2:30 p.m. EDT; password treeoflife  
Columbus, OH phone: [+1-602-580-9619](#) passcode 3633080

- [East Texas](#) - 10:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m. CDT; password treeoflife
  - [Phoenix Northwest, AZ](#) - 10:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m. MST; password treeoflife
  - [Portsmouth, OH](#) - 11 a.m., 3 p.m. EDT
  - [San Francisco Bay Area, CA](#) - 1:30 p.m. PDT  
San Francisco Bay Area, CA phone: [+1-669-900-6833](tel:+16699006833) webinar 867 5488 5979  
San Francisco Bay Area, CA Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UCGbayarea>
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## Inside United Podcast



### Dan Preston and Ernest Grier—Christian Perspective on Race

Guest host Dan Preston, a pastor in North Carolina, interviews a deacon in his area, Ernest Grier. With the trial concerning the death of George Floyd in today's headlines, Grier talks about his experience as a person of color and how to approach issues of race from a Christian perspective.

<https://www.ucg.org/inside-united-podcast/inside-united-podcast-195-dan-preston-and-ernest-grier-christian-perspective-on-race>

Send us your questions, comments, or suggestions at [podcast@ucg.org](mailto:podcast@ucg.org).

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

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## U.S. Holy Day Offering Procedures

*(These instructions are the same as last year, but please share again, as needed.)*

Due to the restrictions placed on meeting together at this time in some parts of the United States, some members will not be able to attend face-to-face meetings this year for the upcoming Holy Days. For those members in the United States, here are three ways that you can conveniently make your Holy Day offering, *if you will not be meeting in person*. Members

in other countries should follow instructions from their own national offices.

### **Donate Online**

Many members already use our website's online donation page at [donate.ucg.org](https://www.ucg.org/donate) to give their Holy Day offerings when they are not able to be at those services—as well as their regular tithes and offerings. About a week in advance of each upcoming Holy Day, the offering for that Holy Day will be added to the donation page; it will remain on the page for about a week after the Holy Day, so you will be able to make your offering online, if you prefer.

If you are new to online donations, we have produced a video that walks you through the process: <https://www.ucg.org/members/news/how-to-donate-online>

If you use the online option, please note the following:

- Please include your PIN (the number that begins with “U” on your green Holy Day offering envelopes, just above your name and address.) This greatly speeds up the processing here at the home office. When a PIN is omitted, it requires extra work on the part of the personnel here at the home office to ensure the donation is being credited to you.
- To optimize your offering, please use the “Online eCheck” option, which is the same as writing a check for your offering—because using your credit card for payment costs the Church around 3% of the donation amount to process.

### **Banking Bill Payment**

Others may choose to use a “bill pay” service through their bank. Again, if you choose to pay this way, in the section for your “account number,” please list your PIN and then, in addition, please put one of these codes after your PIN: (H1=First Day of Unleavened Bread, H2=Last Day of Unleavened Bread, H3=Pentecost). This will help us credit the correct fund for your donation receipt.

### **Sent by Mail**

For those who choose to mail their Holy Day offerings, please use the green Holy Day offering envelopes which were mailed to you earlier. Please use a separate check and envelope for each Holy Day offering. You will then need to place these envelopes into another carrier envelope and mail to the following address:

United Church of God - HDO  
P.O. Box 541027  
Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027

Thank you for your cooperation during these extraordinary times we find ourselves in this year.

— Ministerial and Member Services

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