



United Church of God an International Association

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

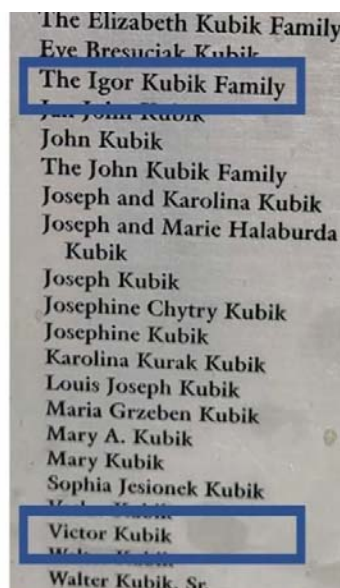
Issue 480

July 22, 2021

Personal From the President...

Bev and I are driving three teenagers to Camp Woodland in Georgia this week. Our teens are so happy to be able to have a camp experience this year after last year's cancellations. We are aware that a number of staff and campers who returned from Camp Pinecrest tested positive for COVID-19. As a result, anyone who was at Camp Pinecrest, as well as anyone who has come in direct contact with someone who was at Camp Pinecrest, should NOT attend services this coming Sabbath. Please pray for the safety of our children for the remaining camp sessions that are and will be in progress.

Pilgrimage To and Through Ellis Island



Kubik family at the Wall of Honor (upper left), Ellis Island (lower left), Wall of Honor names (right).

Last week I took my family, including four grandchildren, to visit Ellis Island in New York Harbor. I want to share this very personal story of God's providence and grace in our lives that has spiritual implications for us all as Christian pilgrims and citizens.

Ellis Island is our country's primary museum devoted entirely to immigration. It is three-quarters of a mile from the iconic Statue of Liberty that represents freedom and justice. From here, you see the majestic skyline of Manhattan. From 1892 to 1954, over 12 million

immigrants entered the United States through the island. They fled from war, famine, failed socialism, oppressive communism and brutal fascism to begin a new life, change their citizenship and adopt a new identity. My parents and I were among them.

Today, about 100 million living descendants of these Ellis Island immigrants account for more than 30 percent of our nation's population. I wanted my children and grandchildren, who are among these descendants, to see where we came from.

My parents originally came to New York on troop carrier USS General C. H. Muir. Originally from the Soviet Union, they survived the Nazi invasion of 1941. They were enslaved as teenagers (my mother was 16) and worked for three years in German factories. Before the war was over, my father was put into a concentration camp and suffered severe beatings. Then as the war ended, they escaped from the advancing Russian army and lived for four years in a United Nations refugee camp in Hannover, Germany, not knowing what would become of them. They could not return to the USSR because they were looked upon as collaborators with the Germans. Refugee camp Lyssenko is where I was born. Fortuitously, my parents found a professor at the University of Minnesota who sponsored them to the United States. You can read the story about a letter that my father wrote him a day before we boarded the troop ship for the United States at kubik.org/kubik-to-america. The letter projects their suffering and ignominy, yet cautious hope about their new life in America.

Upon arriving on Ellis Island in July 1949, we went through a five-hour immigration clearing process. Doctors checked for diseases, particularly trachoma in the eyes. If diagnosed, the person was put back on the ship to go back to where they came from.

The final phase after inspections and before entry into the United States was walking down the "Stairs of Separation"—the dreaded staircase that divided some immigrant families. There were three lines: one for trains to New Jersey and beyond (my parents), one to New York and the middle row to a detention center to be sent back. 98 percent were allowed into the United States. Only two percent were sent back.

The immigrants were required to pay a \$25 processing fee (about \$300 today). Most didn't have any money at all. Lenders on site were glad to advance the money to them since 99 percent of the grateful immigrants paid them back in full.

On the museum tour, I retraced the steps starting at the dock through the intake facility and on to where immigrants boarded a vessel to take them to a train station in New Jersey or to New York City.

What are the spiritual parallels and take-aways? You may already see some.

Christians are like immigrants, more like pilgrims who are on a spiritual journey guided by God to a better country. Here are some passages that describe our odyssey.

"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you'" (Genesis 12:1, English Standard Version throughout). God had other plans for Abraham. He was no longer to remain a citizen of Ur in Mesopotamia, but called to leave his own country and people, and journey to an undesignated land where he would become the founder of a new nation.

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:8-10).

“For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come” (Hebrews 13:14).

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

As Christians we have new identities as citizens of a new country. We have been invited to pass through a spiritual Ellis Island where we become “accepted.” Five years after arriving in the United States, my parents and I became naturalized US citizens.

When I have visited Ukraine, my friends tell me that even though I am a first generation Ukrainian and speak the language, that I don’t and should not identify as a Ukrainian. They rightly say that I am an American of Ukrainian descent. In the same way, we are all the citizens of the Kingdom of God coming from various descents.

“And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him” (Acts 17:26-27).

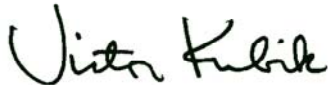
“But glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. (Romans 2:10-11)

As I think about living in the United States and its privileges, I think of an even greater future time for all who yield to God and accept His invitation to His spiritual “Ellis Island.” This invitation is and will be available to all. God has a very special interest in you, and is looking for you to yield to and obey Him. I look forward to a time, which hopefully is not too distant, where justice under and within the law of God will rule and be available to all.

The final stop on the visit was to the Wall of Honor where my name and my parents’ names are inscribed. This wall was recently finished and renovated and contains names on 770 panels circling the island. It brought Revelation 2:17 to mind: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.”

This visit graphically underscored and pointed to our identity and journey as Christians. It made me more thankful and appreciative for the awesome working of God in our lives!

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

Report from Camp Ironwood

Preteen Camp Ironwood concluded an exciting and memorable camp on Wednesday afternoon (July 20) at the beautiful outdoor country setting of Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch. There were 119 of us—which included 49 preteens, 9 mini dorm campers under age 5, 14 teen staff and 47 adult staff—who enjoyed 4 days of living, playing and working together “God’s way.” The camp was attended by campers and staff from several states, including Oregon, Texas, Illinois, Missouri, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan and Minnesota.

God blessed the camp with His protection for campers and staff and with great weather for our outdoor activities. On the last day of camp we had a rain shower which did not dampen spirits as we moved inside for a couple of activities.



One of our goals this year was to enrich the children's lives by giving them opportunities to build relationships with other children who share common beliefs, experience a variety of challenging activities and deepen their relationship with God by getting to know more about their loving Father. The theme of this year's camp was “There's Nothing God Can't Do.” Christian Living classes emphasized how great and awesome our God is and how much He loves His children. The theme was emphasized throughout the day in activities and in the evening wrap-up dorm time. We focused our final Christian Living classes on building a relationship with God through prayer. The campers enjoyed watching Jelly's newest video, “Jelly Learns to Pray.” The campers immediately started trying to memorize the words to the song.



Camp Ironwood is a family camp with many parents bringing all their children—preteens, teens and preschoolers—to spend four days together in a loving and nurturing family environment. This year we had a wonderful group of teens who served as assistant counselors and activity assistants, and were the big brothers and big sisters to the campers. Adult staff included many dedicated and hard-working parents serving as activity coordinators, counselors and support staff, and they also enjoyed the opportunities to interact with their children during the day.



Waiting patiently for their turn to take a pony ride.

It was a fun-filled four days with a variety of activities including: horseback riding, swimming, tubing down a steep hill, arts and crafts, field games, climbing wall, archery/BB, creek walk, team challenge, campus improvement, slingshot and a visit to the petting zoo, as well as evening activities which included a sing-a-long/campfire, carnival, novelty Olympics, treasure hunt and a fun evening of dancing with Jelly.



Local church members came to watch campers and staff at novelty Olympics.

One counselor wrote: “I watched a group of young boys from different families and backgrounds start out separate and come together as a family. And like any family, it may not always be perfect; the love and kindness they showed each other after our talk the first day was enough to make me proud of them. . .”

One parent commented that the camp made a real impact on their child, who returned home happier than they'd been in a long time.

Jamie Schreiber made a video for campers to recall special camp memories:

<https://youtu.be/8AkURf-0B8A>

We praise God and are grateful to Him for another successful year at Camp Ironwood!

—David Schreiber, camp director, Camp Ironwood

Report from Camp Pinecrest

In 1996, the UYC program held our first teen camp at Camp Pinecrest in Southeast Missouri. For 25 summers, Camp Pinecrest has provided stories and traditions that our campers have come to love.

This summer was no exception.



96 campers (47 ladies and 49 gentlemen), along with 63 staff, enjoyed God's wonderful blessings which were evident for all to see. The weather was perfect, with clear skies and comfortable temperatures (not always the case for Missouri in July).



While many of Camp Pinecrest's traditions remained, new activities were added and well received. A new photo-journalism class, a second dance and the return of the Amazing Race all added to the fun, teamwork and learning at camp. For the first time, we also used a newer

dorm for our gentlemen. This provided the ability to house the four ladies' dorms in one building and the four men's dorms in their own.



The creativity and enthusiasm of the staff was felt and seen across camp and our campers enjoyed another great week at Pinecrest.



Despite the precautions that were taken, a number of campers and staff have tested positive for COVID-19 after camp. To keep the virus from spreading further, UYC is making sure campers and staff from Pinecrest do not attend other UYC teen and preteen camps that start this month, regardless of whether they contracted the virus or not. We are praying for everyone's full recovery from the virus.

We look forward to being together again next summer, creating new memories and continuing the traditions that have made Camp Pinecrest the wonderful summer destination it is.

—Mike Phelps, camp director, Camp Pinecrest

Report from Northwest Camp



UYC Northwest camp is once again being held on the Pacific Coast at beautiful Camp Magruder located at Rockaway Beach, Oregon. 82 campers and 44 staff are enjoying the nearly perfect sunny weather while learning to “Be Anchored to God” all during their lives. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions we have had to make some modifications in order to operate the camp program this year. The restrictions include wearing masks when inside the major buildings, eating meals outside on picnic tables and dividing the campers into three “cohorts.” The cohorts remain six feet or more apart and are identified when indoors by the colors of masks provided by UYC. The masks we purchased are thin athletic ones that provide ease of breathing but fulfill the requirements.



Since while at camp the dorms stay together for activities, meals and evening activities, the cohort requirement has been fairly simple to abide by and we have had full cooperation from all staff and campers. The activities are primarily on site this year, including kayaking on Smith Lake, pickle ball, archery, beach volleyball, skim boarding and boogie board riding in the waves, speedaway on the beach, dance class (held outdoors on a patio), outdoor photography, softball and waterskiing at Lytle Lake. The daily Christian Living themes are reinforced and included in the activities during the day.



Monday night campfire was held on the beach with the sun setting over a calm Pacific Ocean. The first activity was a sandcastle building contest which was won by the G2 girls, followed by games, dorm cleanliness awards, Bible Bingo and an inspirational story by Mr. Lynn Pate, who has served at teen camps for 50 years. He encouraged campers to be true to God's Sabbath, no matter what the challenge.



Wednesday evening, campers and staff enjoyed a ride on the Oregon Scenic Coastal Train, always a highlight of the week. We look forward to the rest of the week learning God's way and making new friends. We are thankful for God's protection, as everyone has been healthy and the camp nurse has not been busy. Thanks to everyone for your prayers and support of the UYC camp program!

—Rex Sexton, camp director, Northwest Camp

Jelly Learns to Pray: View the new UCG short film

Watch Jelly's newest short film, "Jelly Learns to Pray." [<https://youtu.be/ryiyR6sebmw>]



Jelly has his first sleepover with his friends. The boys have a little fun before the babysitter returns. Join Jelly and his friends as they learn how to pray.

View the entire Jelly short film series at ucg.org/members/kids#jelly and catch up on all 12 previous episodes.

—Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services

Job Opening: Video Editor

The United Church of God has announced an opening for a video editor. The position will be responsible for editing internal video projects including:

- Sermon videos.
- Ministerial training videos.
- Educational videos.
- Special project videos.
- Camera operation for *Beyond Today* television.
- Plus, any other projects assigned by supervisor.

Working closely with a team in a creative environment is essential. Knowledge of video editing software (Adobe Premier Pro, Apple Final Cut or Avid Media Composer) is required, and competency using photo editing software (Photoshop) and animation software (Adobe After Effects) is a plus, along with storytelling skills and an eye for detail.

A bachelor's degree (B.A.) and one to two years' direct related experience is preferred, with training in communication. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered. Strong language, logic and communication skills, and algebra/geometry level math skills are required. Those applying for consideration and invited for an interview must supply a portfolio of their work.

Potential employees must be baptized members (in good standing) of the United Church of God. Applicants must be biblically literate and possess a thorough working knowledge of the doctrines, beliefs and practices of the United Church of God.

To request a job application or for questions about the position, please contact human_resources@ucg.org.

—Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services

Inside United Podcast



Darris McNeely—Trip to Turkey Part 2

Darris McNeely joins Victor Kubik to further discuss his trip to Turkey to visit the ruins of the seven churches of Revelation. This week, they speak about Thyatira, Philadelphia, as well as the city of Smyrna and the significant events that took place there.

ucg.org/inside-united-podcast/inside-united-podcast-212-darris-mcneely-trip-to-turkey-part-2

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