



United Church of God *an International Association*

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

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Personal From the President...

Studying the Word—A Road Map for Life

In a few days I will preside over the 23rd graduation ceremony for Ambassador Bible College, for the Class of 2022. (Sunday, May 8, beginning at 11 a.m. EDT, you can watch it live online at abc.ucg.org/webcast/graduation-2022)



Ambassador Bible College Class of 2022

In completing their one-year study here in Milford, ABC students have been challenged to dig deeply into the Word of God. Since the fall, they have pored over, discussed and researched the

full collection of 66 books/letters that contain more than 770,000 words (in the New King James Version).

What are these words that they have spent so much time studying in a seven-hour-a-day educational curriculum, led by leading ministers and administrators of the United Church of God? Is this merely a compilation of ancient documents, ancestral charts, poems and sayings? Does ABC only focus on history, prophecy, geography and archaeology as they are linked to the biblical record?

What do ABC students—and those who take part in the ABC sampler and the ABC Continuing Education programs—systematically study?

When we think of “word,” it is more than a combination of letters or syllables to identify something.

What is the full English definition of “word?” At yourdictionary.com/word, there are 85 meanings listed for “word.” The important consideration is that a word “symbolizes and communicates a meaning.” It can range from “a promise, affirmation, or assurance” to “discourse or talk; speech” to rumor, proverbs, sayings, arguments and commands.

We, of course, regard the critical definition of “word” as the Scriptures, the Bible and, in full expression, Jesus Christ Himself as “The Word.”

The Bible itself defines what it is. Jesus declared: “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

He spoke of the power of the word thus: “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). Jesus’ prayer to God the Father was a petition to set apart and protect His disciples by the priceless knowledge contained and preserved for us in the recorded words from God.

As stated by the apostle Paul, the Bible describes its purpose: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, English Standard Version).

What did our ABC students dig deep into?

While they come to Ambassador Bible College with a certain level of maturity and familiarity with God’s Word, ABC students spend considerable time reviewing and deeply studying the meaning of the words they read. As part of that review of the Bible and its history, they learn what those words meant to the people to whom they were originally written. Most importantly, ABC faculty carefully teach and confirm that what we read in the Bible is God talking powerfully to *us* as individuals. The ABC systematic review of the Bible offers our students lessons, admonitions and instructions from these ageless words that transform and renew our minds (Romans 12:1-2).

The Bible serves as a powerful tool to assess our thoughts and behaviors at all levels. Those living in the world may not know the Bible, but the Bible knows all about humanity!

Consider this: “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 discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:12-13).

Just as the classes before them achieved, the current class has done well in taking advantage of this rigorous biblical curriculum. I led a forum with our then-new students last Sept. 9 (2021) where I asked them what they wanted to get from a year’s study of the Bible. They responded to a brief questionnaire, which results I kept. After nine months of the ABC experience, I asked them the same question last week and they again responded—with remarkable results! Here’s a sample:

Bryston Bower

BEFORE: I came to get an understanding of the Bible that I haven’t previously had . . . I want to grow deeper in my faith with God.

NOW: I got a lot from coming to ABC—knowledge, friendship, memories and growth. The biggest thing I would say is my motivation to build my relationship with God has grown.

Bryan Styer

BEFORE: To have a stronger foundation for my beliefs, closer relationship with God, and make prayer and Bible study a part of my everyday life.

NOW: The year has been very beneficial for me. I feel that my knowledge of the Bible has enhanced a lot and so has my relationship with God . . . The classes have helped give me a more in-depth understanding and a better foundation.

Sue Robison

BEFORE: Deepen my understanding of the Bible. Be able to give a solid answer when asked and my goal is to develop better study habits.

NOW: I do feel that my Bible knowledge has grown. I also feel more confident in being able to research a subject for better understanding . . . I feel it is important to be of service to Church family as well as in the community when there is a need.

Audrey McGuire

BEFORE: I came to ABC because . . . I realized [I’m] not nearly as close as I want to be [to God]. I am a sixth generation in the Church . . . [I want to] make it my religion and my beliefs.

NOW: I have never felt more connected to God than I have in this past year. I feel like I have grown so much in my relationship with Him, and that I have a good journey ahead of me as I continue becoming closer to Him and His ways.

Winston Snyder

BEFORE: The main purpose for me to come to ABC was further my relationship to God . . . and I want to strengthen my foundation . . . To build a stronger foundation, be a disciple and a light into the world.

NOW: [ABC] was motivational for me to continue to work towards a being like our Elder Brother and Savior, Christ, the only one we need to compare ourselves to. Ambassador Bible College was the fundamental change in my life that I needed . . . I hope to be a better disciple and a light in this world wherever I go.

Vanessa Bean

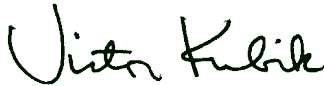
BEFORE: I came because I needed to draw closer to God and in a more in-depth way. I . . . have that feeling of thirsting and hungering after the word.

NOW: The year was great, it definitely helped me to draw closer to God . . . I've learned so much . . . I'm going to miss everyone . . . you're all a family to me.

ABC continues to bear spiritual fruit, helping to train potential leaders and servants for the Church! Even though this Sunday will be my last ABC function as President of the United Church of God, I look forward to the privilege of continuing to teach at the ABC Continuing Education program later this month and to return one day a week in the fall to teach the General Epistles class, one I greatly appreciate. While the Class of 2022 has been outstanding, we look forward to the new Class of 2023 which will be arriving in a few months.

Want to experience Ambassador Bible College for yourself? We encourage people to submit an application for admission (there are still openings), but if you just want to take in some of the spiritually rich presentations, go online to abc.ucg.org/courses. There you can sample many of the courses taught straight from the Word of God!

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

From Ministerial and Member Services...

We greatly appreciate David Mills' invaluable service as interim pastor for the Columbus and Macon, Georgia, congregations these past eight months. Mr. Mills will continue serving the Columbus and Macon congregations as an elder.



Skeets and Brenda Mez

Beginning June 4, Skeets Mez will serve as the pastor for Columbus and Macon while continuing to pastor the Mobile (Alabama) and DeFuniak Springs (Florida) congregations.



Greg and Robin Musgrove

Beginning May 22, Greg Musgrove will pastor the congregations in Laurel, Mississippi, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

We are very grateful for the dedicated and faithful service of these men and their wives.

United Youth Camps Update

Our official deadline for teen and preteen camp registration was May 1, but if you have not applied and want to come to camp then please do so right away. We have high registration numbers for teen camps with 478 campers and 330 staff. For preteens, the registration numbers are 334 campers and 392 staff. Apply online at uyc.ucg.org.

Job Opening: Associate Editor, *United News* and Internal Publications

The United Church of God has announced an opening for an associate editor for *United News* and other internal publications.

The associate editor's primary responsibilities will be to copy edit and lay out *United News*, as well as the *Festival Planning Brochure*, the *United Youth Camps Magazine* and Ambassador Bible College publications.

A bachelor's degree (B.A.) and one to two years' direct related experience is preferred, with training in communications, English grammar and proofreading. Experience using desktop publishing (Adobe InDesign) and photo editing (Photoshop) software is needed. 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 apply or for more information about the position, please contact human_resources@ucg.org.

Job Opportunities

The United Church of God is still seeking a Systems Administrator/Programmer and a Web Developer. Details about all of the current job postings for the Church may be reviewed at ucg.org/members/news/current-job-openings.

Inside United Podcast



Connie Seelig—You’ve Got Mail

On the eve of retirement, Connie Seelig will join us today to reflect on her years of experience that have helped the mail processing department run smoothly since the inception of the United Church of God.

ucg.org/inside-united-podcast/inside-united-podcast-243-connie-seelig-youve-got-mail

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

Listen to past episodes: ucg.org/inside-united-podcast

Pray for the Gospel to Have Free Course
(2 Thes. 3:1 KJV)

God’s Work in Italy

Carmelo Anastasi, senior pastor for Italy, writes: “I would like to ask all of you to pray for the continuing success of our new ‘proclamation workshop’ that we began on an experimental basis six months ago. It was designed to give our baptized members practical instructions on how to effectively proclaim the virtues of the One who called them from darkness to His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

“Through this effort to reach the public with the message of the gospel, we give our brethren careful pastoral and editorial instruction and guidance on how to advertise our Church’s magazines, brochures and video-sermons along with their personal comments on Facebook and other social networks. Most of our members agreed to participate in our online workshop that takes place every Wednesday evening. The result? Many new people have contacted us for the first time and have asked to participate in our midweek Bible studies and our church services every Sabbath. The number of participants today has risen to over 100!

“Again, your prayers for God’s blessing on our new proclamation effort would be much appreciated. Plus, may I ask everyone to continue praying for one another and be very thankful to God. This is because in the past we were not a people, but now we are the people of God due to His marvelous mercy (1 Peter 2:10).”

—Peter Eddington, Operation Manager, Media and Communications Services

Northwest Family and Graduation Weekend—May 27–30

Join us for food, fellowship, fun, and a special tribute to our graduates at this year’s Northwest Family and Graduation Weekend held Memorial Day weekend, May 27–30. Activities begin on Sabbath morning with adult and teen Bible studies, followed by Sabbath services, a banquet for everyone and Bible games.

Sunday will feature two Bible seminars, sports games during the day and family and teen dances in the evening. A group outdoor hike will be organized for Monday. More information and registration is available at www.ucgpdx.org.

—Rex Sexton

Report From Phoenix Holy Day Activity

The Phoenix, Arizona, church family kicked off the 2022 Holy Days with a Feast to remember. 276 people gathered to observe the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread at the Phoenix Sheraton Crescent hotel. Visitors from around the United States made the festivities all the more joyous.



After sunset, 184 participants enjoyed dinner, dancing and fellowship. Brethren of all ages got a chance to socialize and boogie, and a special visit from UCG pal Jelly made a memorable night for everyone.



On Sunday morning, 36 adventurers hiked through the nature trails of Piestewa Peak, the blooming desert landscape and rolling rockscape in the Phoenix Mountain Preserve. The mountains made for a memorable time, especially for those from out of town. We are grateful for all who embraced the opportunity to fellowship and consider God's great plan during the Feast days!

—Zoey Gabbard and Jordan Vargas