



# United Church of God *an International Association*

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Chairman

Victor Kubik  
President

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Fellow ministers and dear brethren around the world,

I hope this letter finds each of you well and spiritually prospering in every way. We have just completed observing the Christian Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. What a wonderful gateway this is into seeking God's ongoing direction, intervention and blessings as the ministry gathers at the annual meeting of the General Conference of Elders (GCE) in Milford, Ohio, from May 13-16.

These God-ordained festivals refresh us that He alone is sovereign and intervenes in human history and individual lives as He so chooses with whom, where and when to bring forth His purpose. It's He who opens doors—whether it be physical deliverance from adversity like Egypt, or when seemingly “our backs are up against a wall,” like at the Red Sea. It's He who creates unimaginable pathways like moving through the Jordan River on dry land towards His promises, or knocks down impregnable obstacles like Jericho's walls. It's He who opens seemingly dead-end tombs like that of Christ.

All of these events that occurred within and surrounding the recent festivals allow us to imbibe in God's faithful Spirit to lean forward and allow Him to direct our future steps in performing the mission set before us to declare spiritual deliverance as we preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God, make disciples in all nations, and care for those disciples. It's with such confidence towards our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, *the living Head of the Church* (Colossians 1:18), that we approach this meeting of the General Conference. After all, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

Thus, ministry from around the world will come together to attend to these needs. This coming Friday, May 13, I look forward to attending a meeting along with UCGIA president Victor Kubik and other administration personnel to interact with our international representatives to hear from them about God's work in their respective areas and how we can most effectively serve them. Let's always remember that we truly are an “international association” as we strive to mutually esteem and respect the various unique needs of the ever-expanding international tapestry that God is weaving into the culture of His Kingdom.

We will then begin to move further into the GCE weekend with a church service on May 14 that many of you will partake in via the webcast. We then move to Sunday with business meetings, with addresses to the Conference by the president, our operation managers and myself.

That morning session is very important. Many of you see your elders serve throughout the week in your local areas, but as GCE members, they take on an expanded role. Allow me to quote from Article 3.2.2.3 of the UCG Constitution: “*God has established the office of elder to provide care and oversight to the congregations. Thus, the General Conference of Elders is responsible to God to ensure that his people are served and their needs are attended to.*” What an awesome responsibility to be accountable before God concerning the general welfare of His people both in spiritual and organizational matters. The wording is important in that it establishes the reality that congregations are to have their needs and aspirations attended to, which means that all of you reading

this letter are to be thoroughly represented and heard from in a responsible forum via these men set apart by ordination.

With this end in mind: Your elders participate in critically examining the proposed Strategic and Operation Plans and the Budget of the Church placed before them by the Council of Elders and the administration. These “plans” are actually an organized and systematic means of ultimately producing spiritual fruit and glorifying God’s purpose in us now, and to share with others who might respond to His call. The elders will also be selecting four ministers (three from the U.S.A. and one international) to sit on the 12-man Council for three-year terms. They will consider approving a doctrine statement regarding the biblical principle of marriage between a man and a woman. Additionally, they have been asked to consider modifying Article 5.1 of the Constitution in regards to approving Fundamental Beliefs from approval by all listed GCE elders to those who actually vote on this specific matter. The same high threshold of 75 percent approval would remain intact.

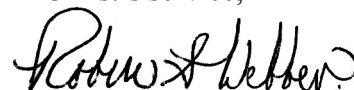
On Sunday morning, we will also recognize and honor those who have served God over many years, as well as those in our ministerial ranks who have died in the faith. We then move into presentations regarding the conference theme for this year, *“Live the Word,”* which is a natural (spiritual!) extension from last year’s theme of *“Labor in the Word.”* Jesus said, *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God that proceeds from the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4). Our keynote speaker, Mark Welch of Texas, will explore and expand on this subject to lay the foundation for other presentations to follow.

On Monday morning, we will have a unique opportunity to allow *“iron to sharpen iron”* with breakout sessions around tables discussing questions and issues that come up in local congregations. In the afternoon, we build on Sunday’s foundation with presentations and workshops on *“International Perspectives of Living the Word”* by Jorge de Campos and *“Living the Weightier Matters of the Law”* by Don Ward.

On Tuesday, we move into abbreviated Council of Elders meetings for 2 ½ days (please note the full attached agenda). If any new Council members are selected on Sunday, they will sit in on the meetings as observers to provide a meaningful transition from one Council to the next. The Council will perform its annual review of the president and corporate secretary. Mr. Kubik will share ongoing initiatives regarding ministerial education and young adult leadership programming. We look forward to reviewing ministerial ordinations. At the end of the session, a new chairman will be selected for the Council of Elders (2016-2018).

Dear friends in Christ and fellow brethren: Please pray and fast (as you are able) earnestly that God will shower us with His favor and blessings and directing hand. I sincerely ask that you petition our Heavenly Father to pour out on His ministry *“the wisdom that is from above”*—a wisdom which is *“first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy”* (James 3:17). Let us petition our Maker for His will to be done as we consider the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 16:25-27: *“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began, but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandments of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.”*

In Christ’s service,



Robin Webber