



# United Church of God *an International Association*

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Dear brethren,

Jesus Christ established His Church in Jerusalem 1,984 years ago on the Day of Pentecost. After Jesus' ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit dramatically moved the apostles—particularly Peter—to preach Jesus Christ with boldness, and 3,000 people were immediately baptized.

Twenty years ago, in 1995, on this same observance, the United Church of God held its first official service. On each of these events the Church rejoiced with a high hand of looking with optimism to fulfilling our commission to preach the gospel and to care for those whom God has called. The commission is our overall work-plan from Jesus Christ and God the Father—to whom we report. It's His Work. It's our job to faithfully fulfill it.

We continue to look to the future of the Church with optimism once again as we reflect on who we are, what our mission is and what our resources are—both human and material. We have been given a job to do.

I want to let you know about some new developments since last time I wrote.

First, our new UCG.org website is online. It is a beauty! And it's been optimized for mobile operation. Sixty percent (and rising) of our website users are coming to us on the Internet via smart phone or tablet. The menus have been greatly simplified for these smaller screens. Using the *search* and *menu* functions will get you to our 30,000 pages of content on hundreds of subjects instantly. Please check the latest edition of *United News* that displays an easy to understand tutorial of the new functions.

Our site is divided into two main entities: The Church and *Beyond Today (BT)*. The Church side contains all the information about local congregations, webcasts and online sermons. It has a section for newcomers to orient them to the United Church of God. The *Beyond Today* side is everything else—our television, video, *BT* Bible studies, magazine, booklets, teen study guides, youth articles, blogs and more. I use the site several times daily, as it is a treasure house and well-indexed stock of knowledge about everything we've written, preached, televised, posted, and so much more.

The other news is our moving with boldness into developing our pastoral ministry. We will go back to the practice of years gone by of sending out ministerial trainees to be mentored by seasoned experienced pastors around the country. We plan to initially hire six couples. Periodically we will bring them to the home office for weeks at a time for intensive training with our ministry here.

When I was sent out as a trainee I was 21 years old and single. I had no car and lived simply and worked daily with the pastor of the two congregations. While I did have Ambassador College training, I needed intensive practical training in speaking, visiting, counseling, organizing activities and all the rest that comprise the work of the minister.

Many of us as trainees were very young. In contrast, the ones we are hiring are mostly in their 30s, already married and already in a career—who are now making a decision to be considered for the full-time pastoral ministry. I have been so impressed with these couples all of whom have a strong desire to dedicate their lives in this manner. It is reminiscent of my time when we graduated not knowing what the future would bring, but we faced it with eagerness, sacrifice and determination. This is what I see in our new ministry.

We have a number of education tools that will help with the academic side of their development. We have online pastoral care training, the new “Labor in the Word” initiative and Ambassador Bible College.

At the same time our older ministers are retiring. We will see a number of beloved names complete their full-time career and enter another phase of their rich lives. They will have time with family, grandchildren and be able to do things that they had not been able to do while heavily encumbered with all the duties of pastoring. They can continue helping as they wish, including giving sermons. We hope that some of them would also function as mentors for the trainees and younger elders. We are prayerful that this will work.

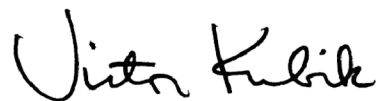
This past Sunday at the home office we graduated the 16th Ambassador Bible College (ABC) class. ABC will take on a more direct role in helping discover and train potential leaders and servants. At the Council of Elders meetings here earlier this month, the mission statement for ABC was updated to this:

“The Mission of Ambassador Bible College, sponsored by the United Church of God, *an International Association*, is to diligently uphold and faithfully teach the truths of God, as found in the Bible, to equip disciples of Jesus Christ for a life of faithfulness and godly service.”

I thank God for what He is doing. He is the one who is guiding all of us to be instruments in His commission. The Day of Pentecost is all about the Church of Jesus Christ and His work. Thank you for your faithfulness and support in this commission to preach Jesus Christ.

I pray for you continually and ask that you pray for us. Please hold up our hands as we endeavor to fulfill our part. May the God of grace and peace be with you!

In Christ’s service,



Victor Kubik