

FROM OUR PASTOR

April 16, 2016

Sabbath Greeting to Everyone!

As God's people around the world prepare to observe the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, we focus on our reconciliation to our Creator God and the coming of His Kingdom to rule all the earth in peace.

Thankfully we can still assemble in peace and relative safety in most of the Western world, but tensions are high in several tinder box locations. Vladimir Putin has not taken a break of any kind when it comes to insulting and provoking countries he sees as interfering with his plan to re-establish the Soviet Union.

This past week, a United States Navy destroyer operating in international waters in the Baltic Sea experienced several close provocations by Russian aircraft. The USS Donald Cook encountered multiple, aggressive flight maneuvers by Russian aircraft that were performed within close proximity of the ship.

On April 11, during deck landing drills with an allied military helicopter two Russian SU-24 jets made numerous close-range low altitude passes. These passes were in attack mode just off the water. The destroyer would have been within normal codes if it had shot the planes down, but chose not to.

The following day, while the Donald Cook was operating in international waters, a Russian KA-27 Helix helicopter conducted circles at low altitude around the ship, seven in total. Afterwards two Russian SU-24 jets made numerous close-range and low altitude passes, eleven in total. The message from Putin is clear: "stay out of "our lakes" – the Baltic and Black seas." How the US will react is predictable-meaningless words which Putin will laugh at.

As a result of our national sins the USA has truly "lost the pride of our power" as God foretold in Leviticus 26:19. The penalties for rejecting the God who showered incredible blessings on us are coming to pass. Many now are embarrassed and disgusted at the current chaos of the US election process and the candidates offered. Where is the wisdom that once filled our leaders? Has it perished?

Nearly three thousand years ago the prophet Isaiah predicted of our time: *"For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish. And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden."* Isaiah 29:14.

Real wisdom comes from fearing and learning about God. Proverbs 9:10 tells us *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."* Our nation has rejected God, so wisdom has rejected us.

The annual Holy Days that are given to us in the Bible are great tools to teach us about our Creator and His plan of salvation for all mankind. What a great privilege it is to understand them and keep them each year! We have hope in something much better than what we see and hear now.

The society is passing away, but by keeping the Holy Days we understand that a wonderful new world will replace this one—hopefully in the not too distant future.

“ . . .the world is passing away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2:17

*Rex Sexton
Pastor, UCG Portland*